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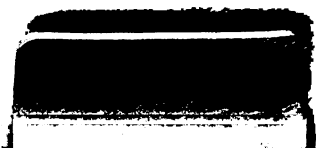

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# MEMOIRS

OF

# THE EMPRESS JOSEPHINE.

BY

JOHN S. MEMES, LL.D.

AUTHOR OF "THE HISTORY OF SCULPTURE, PAINTING, AND ARCHITECTURE," ETC.

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# PREFACE.

THE biographer who professes to write from other sources than personal knowledge can claim little merit beyond diligent inquiry and happy arrangement. Whether he has been fortunate in their combination does not belong to the author to determine; but he believes the materials will be found to have been laboriously collected and carefully examined. Upwards of one hundred volumes, many of them unknown to the English reader, have been consulted; but it was deemed unnecessary to crowd the page with references, especially as the main facts in these Memoirs are made to rest chiefly on the authority of the principal personage. The numerous letters and conversations of the Empress which appear in the volume, are from originals understood to be still in possession of her family, or from sources equally authentic. In its plan, however, and composition, the present is strictly an original work, since no complete Life of Josephine has previously appeared.

By all who wisely prefer, or whose duty leads them to cultivate, the virtues and dispositions which in domestic life impart a charm beyond all that greatness can bestow, the life of Josephine will be viewed with pleasure, and in many things may be imitated not without advantage.

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JOSEPHINE, the partner of a throne the most powerful which, from the era of Charlemagne, had existed in Europe for a thousand years, originally belonged to a rank in society hardly the first, in a distant colony of the French monarchy. But if her elevation was great, few could have borne its honours with equal meekness or truer grace; and perhaps no one ever rose to a sceptre less envied, or descended from royalty more universally beloved.

The name of this celebrated lady has been variously given; the only decisive authority,—her own signature to a public document,—is *M. J. R. Tascher*, or Marie-Joseph-Rose-Tascher. These are jointly the baptismal appellations of both parents. Her

father was *Joseph-Gaspard-Tascher*, frequently, but improperly, written *Detascher*, and her mother, *Rose-Claire-Desvergers de Sanois*,—both natives of France, though married in St. Domingo about 1761. Of these individuals, now become historical personages, little interesting information has been preserved. Occurrences in private life are seldom retained, and can rarely be recovered, when they derive their sole importance from unexpected and long subsequent events. M. Tascher had early embraced a military career, and attained the rank of captain in a regiment of horse. This station necessarily implies honourable descent, even were there not other means of ascertaining the condition of his family; for certain quarterings of nobility, as the term goes on the Continent, constituted a qualification indispensable to an officer, especially of cavalry, in the armies of old France. He appears to have proceeded to the West Indies on professional duty some time in 1758, but, at the period of his daughter's birth, had retired from the service, and then resided upon an estate in St. Domingo, called *La Pagerie*. Of his wife, Mademoiselle de Sanois, almost no particular is recorded beyond the fact of her having been the daughter of an ancient and respectable family in one of the southern provinces, which, some years prior to her union with Captain Tascher, falling into straitened, or, at least, less opulent circumstances, from the unsuccessful issue of a lawsuit, had retired to possessions in the New World.

Of this parentage, the only child, the subject of these Memoirs, was born at St. Pierre, the capital of Martinico, on the 23d of June, 1763. By some authorities, and among others, the act of her civil marriage with Bonaparte, still extant on the revolutionary registers of Paris, Josephine's birth is placed in 1767. The four years, however, thus deducted from her real age must be assigned either to mistake or, not improbably, in the instance quoted,

to voluntary forgetfulness. It is deserving of notice also, as something like a mutual abnegation of curious inquiry on this head, that in the same instrument one year is added to the General's age. The births of the children of her first marriage are likewise decisive on the point; and, in truth, so little attention has been paid to consistency here, that we have read biographies of Josephine, whose authors, with an innocent inadvertence to the fact, make her a mother at the age of little more than ten years.

The infancy and youth of Josephine were passed, not under the paternal roof, but with an aunt. Instead, therefore, of returning to St. Domingo with her parents, the infant remained in the island of Martinico. We can discover no cause for this, save a family arrangement in the first instance, and the premature death of her mother. Without being aware of these circumstances, however, and perhaps not recollecting that her father died before she had become known, the reader might deem it remarkable, and even ungrateful, that Josephine so seldom mentioned, and consequently has left such slight and imperfect memorials of her parents. But opportunities will hereafter occur of proving, from her affectionate attention to every surviving member of her father's family, and unshaken friendship for the relatives of her first husband, that hers was a heart incapable alike of ingratitude, as of feeling ashamed of an humble origin. She appears, in truth, to have remembered nothing of her mother, and extremely little of her father; for, while writing and speaking in the most endearing terms of her aunt,—"that excellent woman," to use her own expression, "that tender mother, that perfect being whose virtues you, my children, have so often heard me extol,"—she makes no mention, in a letter which there was every reason to suppose would be her last,

of either father or mother, even so distantly as to induce the belief that she had ever known them.

Madame Renaudin, the amiable guide to whom Josephine's infancy was thus intrusted, had married a gentleman who, with considerable estates of his own, acted also as factor on others, of which the proprietors resided in the mother country. He appears to have been a person of great worth, and had rendered himself known over the whole of the islands for a humane yet successful treatment of his slaves. At this period, the seven or eight hundred negroes in Martinico were generally in a most deplorable state; and Josephine has drawn a frightful contrast between "the African who, with sweat, and even blood, laboured a soil which was not thus fertilized for him, and those tyrants who, by such detestable means, wallowed in riches, and gorged themselves with luxury. Such," continues she, "was the aspect presented throughout the colony. The appearance of the habitation of my infancy was very different. There indeed still existed the distinction of master and slave; but the former exercised his power without cruelty, and the latter, faithful and zealous, lived exempt from sorrow. With the exception of freedom, the blacks participated in all the advantages of social communion, and shared the pleasures of life. Their attachments were not rudely severed, but well-assorted marriages recompensed their tried fidelity. Far from their country, they thus experienced the ties of family and friendship gathering around them; and while performing their national dances to the sound of their own simple music, they wept tears of joy, and found they had recovered a home."

In a residence thus endeared by humanity, and embellished by the accomplishments of her aunt, Josephine passed an infancy and early youth of unmingled happiness. Often did she revert in after

life to the peaceful enjoyments of that period, not, indeed, with regret for having left her seclusion, but with bitter disappointment that its sweets were so rarely the growth of the great world. Long and deeply, too, did her good relative bewail the separation which she herself had first sanctioned and advised.

Even from her earliest years, Josephine appears to have displayed those excellencies of character, and that elegance of demeanour, which, amid some frivolities, render her so amiable in every change of her checkered life, and enabled her, in gentleness, yet not without dignity, to maintain an influence over a spirit so differently constituted from her own. From a child, opening beauty and sprightliness, united with perfect good nature, rendered her the delight of her own circle. As she advanced, native refinement supplied the external deficiencies of accomplished instruction denied by her situation, though her future attainments certainly prove, that what aids a colonial residence afforded had not been neglected in her education. It is also to be remembered, that her aunt had been brought up in the mother country, and was a woman admirable alike for the accomplishments of the mind and the qualities of the heart. The general tone of society, also, prevailing at this time in the French American settlements, as respected the intelligence, manners, and birth of the proprietors, very much surpassed the state of the same colonies at a subsequent period. This remark particularly applies to Martinico, by reason of its superior climate, and the peaceful dispositions of the population. Towards the womanhood of Josephine, likewise, the incipient stirrings of convulsion at home, and, still more directly, the transactions on the American continent, attracted numbers of enterprising and accomplished Frenchmen to the islands, who there found a temporary station whence they might observe the posture of affairs, or a retreat after the struggle had ceased,

All these circumstances tended to enlarge her opportunities of improvement, and prepared her early for the splendid part she was destined to act.

These considerations, general as some of them are, possess value when viewed in opposition to opinions which have been expressed on the subject, as furnishing presumptive evidence that Josephine's had been at least equal to the education of young females of the same rank at home. In fact, with such domestic advantages, the reasonable conclusion would be, that it was greatly superior. But we are not left to inferences, however plausible, on this interesting subject. As regards accomplishments, she played, especially on the harp, and sung with exquisite feeling, and with science sufficient to render listening an intellectual pleasure, without exciting the surmise that the cultivation of attainments less showy, but more valuable, had been sacrificed. Her dancing is said to have been perfect. An eyewitness describes her light form, rising scarcely above the middle size, as seeming in its faultless symmetry to float rather than to move,—the very personation of Grace. She exercised her pencil and—though such be not now antiquated for an *élégante*,—her needle and embroidering frame with beautiful address. "A love of flowers," that truly feminine aspiration, and, according to a master in elegance and virtue, infallible index of purity of heart, was with her no uninstructed admiration. She had early cultivated a knowledge of botany, a study of all others especially adapted to the female mind, which exercises without fatiguing the understanding, and leads the thoughts to hold converse with heaven through the sweetest objects of earth. To the Empress Josephine France and Europe are indebted for one of the most beautiful of vegetable productions,—the *Camelia*. In all to which the empire of woman's taste rightly extends, hers was exquisitely just, and simple as it was refined. Her sense of the becoming and the proper in

all things, and under every variety of circumstances, appeared native and intuitive. She read delightfully; and nature had been here peculiarly propitious: for so harmonious were the tones of her voice, even in the most ordinary conversation, that instances are common of those who, coming unexpectedly and unseen within their influence, have remained as if suddenly fascinated and spellbound, till the sounds ceased, or fear of discovery forced the listener away. Like the harp of David on the troubled breast of Israel's king, this charm is known to have wrought powerfully upon Napoleon. His own admission was, "The first applause of the French people sounded to my ear sweet as the voice of Josephine."

The preceding attainments perhaps scarcely extend beyond mere accomplishment. They show a mental organization, however, singularly delicate, susceptible, and refined; and, unless we are deceived, the reader will discover in the numerous letters of the present volume proofs, not only of a mind highly cultivated, but of a soundness and expanse of judgment for which Josephine has not always obtained credit. In the originals is found a graceful ease not inferior to the playful elegance of *De Sevigné*, combined with a simplicity and unpretending expression of sentiment which the more ambitious compositions of the latter frequently want. Many of these, too, were written while she was still very young, and in the midst of tribulation.

In here adverting to the mental endowments of Josephine, the intention is not to represent her in any other light than as an elegant and interesting woman, formed to be the ornament of private life, but having no pretensions, save by some strange vicissitude, to emerge from its peaceful seclusion. At the same time, it seemed desirable early to inform the reader, in contradiction to unaccredited or prejudiced report, that, even in her humblest state, she manifested those talents and graces which rendered her not unworthy

of the high fortunes they afterward adorned.—Doubtless she owed much to her final station, wherein many accomplishments had been acquired, and all subsequently improved; yet still are we chiefly interested in the individual, if not apart from, at least independently of, her singular destinies. Her earliest correspondence, and first exercise of worldly knowledge, show attainments which—and in this light they may seem almost extraordinary—must have been acquired by a simple Creole girl; while on her first introduction to the most brilliant circle in Europe, her dignified ease of manner, and simple elegance of deportment, attracted the same admiration as they afterward commanded in the Louvre and the Tuileries.

With the happy dispositions which have already been described as pervading the establishment of her relatives, it is not to be supposed that the youthful recreations of Josephine experienced any restraint from fears of her attendants, and little from their difference of situation. The companion of her infancy was a mulatto girl, some years older, her foster-sister, and, as is said, though upon no certain grounds, the daughter also of Captain Tascher before his marriage. The name of this dependant, who never afterward quitted her patroness, was Euphemie. In all the amusements and rambles of her young mistress, Euphemie was the faithful and affectionate partner. With such a friend, her own kindliness of heart, and the harmony which here reigned between master and slave, it excites no surprise that Josephine became the universal favourite of the sable maidens of the neighbourhood, or that she should frequently join in their dances, or listen to their songs beneath the tropical shade of the palm and the tamarind. In truth, she herself has said, in the unaffected language of humanity, "I was no stranger to their sports, for, I trust, I proved myself neither insensible to their griefs, nor indifferent to their

labours." On one of these occasions an incident occurred, the only one very particularly recorded of her early years, which exercised an influence, at least over her imagination, almost to the latest hour of her existence. The following is the narrative, in her own words, as she long afterward related the circumstances to the ladies of her court :—

"One day, some time before my first marriage, while taking my usual walk, I observed a number of negro girls assembled round an old woman, engaged in telling their fortunes. I drew near to observe their proceedings. The old sibyl, on beholding me, uttered a loud exclamation, and almost by force seized my hand. She appeared to be under the greatest agitation. Amused at these absurdities, as I thought them, I allowed her to proceed, saying, 'So you discover something extraordinary in my destiny?'—'Yes.'—'Is happiness or misfortune to be my lot?'—'Misfortune. Ah, stop!—and happiness too.'—'You take care not to commit yourself, my good dame; your oracles are not the most intelligible.'—'I am not permitted to render them more clear,' said the woman, raising her eyes with a mysterious expression towards heaven.—'But to the point,' replied I, for my curiosity began to be excited; 'what read you concerning me in futurity?'—'What do I see in the future? You will not believe me if I speak.'—'Yes, indeed, I assure you. Come, my good mother, what am I to fear and hope?'—'On your own head be it then; listen: You will be married soon; that union will not be happy; you will become a widow, and then—then you will be *Queen of France!* Some happy years will be yours; but you will die in an hospital, amid civil commotion.'

"On concluding these words," continued Josephine, "the old woman burst from the crowd, and hurried away, as fast as her limbs, enfeebled by age, would permit. I forbade the bystanders to molest or banter the pretended prophetess on this *ridiculous*

*prediction*; and took occasion, from the seeming absurdity of the whole proceeding, to caution the young negresses how they gave heed to such matters.—Henceforth, I thought of the affair only to laugh at it with my relatives. But afterward, when my husband had perished on the scaffold, in spite of my better judgment, this prediction forcibly recurred to my mind after a lapse of years; and though I was myself then in prison, the transaction daily assumed a less improbable character, and I ended by regarding the fulfilment as almost a matter of course."

The above recital might be corroborated, if necessary, by the evidence of various persons, who, at different times, had likewise heard it from the lips of the individual concerned. One of these has given the narrative with less simplicity, but more dramatic effect, by putting into the mouth of the sable prophetess the words—"Thou shalt be greater, yet less, than Queen of France!" As the writer, however, professes a knowledge of English literature, this variation may be set down to an imitation of Shakspeare's weird sisters. Be this as it may, that such a prediction was actually delivered at the time there appears no reason to doubt; and that Josephine mentioned, and even in some measure acted upon it, before events had transpired, is certain. She was, unquestionably, superstitious, but by no means to the extent which has been attributed to her; and it is likewise true, that even during her most prosperous fortunes, she discountenanced in her attendants all tampering with futurity—not as giving credit to the absurdities of fortune-telling, but because allusion to the subject, by recalling the prediction of her own melancholy end, seemed to bring a cloud over her spirit. In a life conversant with many and extraordinary chances and changes, a deep-felt, perhaps improper, anxiety about things to come is not easily subdued; and to those whose past history discloses inexplicable elevation, especially where religion is

not the guiding light, all appears so contingent, that as a hazard seems to have raised, so a nothing may reverse. Over minds in this situation an apprehensive uncertainty, rather than belief, respecting the mysterious shadowings of the future in the past, obtains a power which springs rather from moral distemperature than superstition; and which those whose days have been of more equal tenor, or their principles better fixed, though they cannot sympathize, are called upon to excuse and to pity. In favour of this lenity, Josephine's affecting conclusion of the narrative which has occasioned these reflections supplies a strong argument:

"Such, ladies, is the exact truth respecting this so celebrated prophecy. The end gives me but little inquietude. I live here [at Navarre, after the divorce] peacefully, and in retirement; I have no concern with politics; I endeavour to do all the good in my power; and thus I hope to die calmly in my bed. It is true that Marie Antoinette"— Here Josephine paused, apparently overcome by the conviction that this instance was against her own conclusions, and that in civil strife virtue affords no protection against popular fury. Her ladies affectionately hastened to change the conversation.

At the period to which the above incident refers, nothing could possibly seem more unlikely than the accomplishment of the prediction. All concurred to render it apparently certain, that for Mademoiselle Tascher was destined the hand of some Creole youth, and a tranquilly indolent existence on one of the neighbouring plantations. Indeed, it appears that some such arrangement had already been contemplated by her relatives. Would Josephine have thus been happier, is a question which naturally occurs to the mind, and to which an answer in the affirmative would probably be the general reply, though the opposite seems nearer the true conclusion. She was not exempt from ambition, "and," to use her own

The succeeding summers were passed in provincial tours, chiefly in the north, or on the patrimonial estates in Brittany. Here, on the 3d of September, 1780, Josephine gave birth to her only son Eugene, afterward the celebrated viceroy of Italy; and in 1783 the family was completed by the birth of a daughter, Hortense, subsequently queen of Holland.

Thus every thing promised happiness: Beauharnais, to energy and nobleness of character, united many generous and some amiable virtues; while Josephine, with a constitutional tenderness of nature which, in her beautiful language, "rendered the desire of being beloved, and of loving in return, a necessity of her heart," evinced the most devoted attachment. Her conduct, too, had been such as merited not only the continued but increased love of her husband. Her gentleness and propriety of demeanour had won over all his relations, healing up every domestic breach; while her talents, accomplishments, and graces abroad had taught the gay world to respect his choice. Beauharnais, too, had loved his wife ardently, but, unhappily, his notions of conjugal fidelity were formed too much after the fashion of vice in high places, which had, for the two preceding reigns, cast a moral pestilence over the uppermost ranks in France; and, though the consequences finally struck a king, in his own example blameless, they operated as a main cause in rousing the indignation of a people to put away the degradation of a worthless and profligate aristocracy. It is more than probable, also, that the *new ideas* had not improved the old morality,—a surmise which needs no proof to those acquainted with the history of the Revolution. Madame de Beauharnais endured her wrongs for some time in patient forbearance, or remonstrated only with gentleness; but seeing that her husband attached himself more and more to another, she infused a bitterness into her

reproaches, which ended in estranging the affections she had hoped to reclaim. Each persisted: the vicomte openly cohabited with the woman who had ruined his domestic peace, and a separation was the consequence. This appears to have been effected by a personal agreement, not a legal process, and Josephine, with her children, returned to Martinico. When future misfortune had taught Beauharnais to reflect, with the proper dispositions, on this portion of his life, he bitterly regretted his own errors, and the absence of his excellent brother, who, though opposed to him in almost every principle of conduct, exercised great influence over his affections. It is likewise possible, that had the marquis been present, Josephine might have used more conciliatory means; for, at every period of life, jealousy appears to have held great sway over her mind—a failing, perhaps, in some degree inseparable from an affectionate temperament.

Over the whole of these transactions, however, a veil has been drawn which it is now difficult to remove. The only person who could have cleared away the obscurity was desirous of consigning to more perfect oblivion whatever might have reflected on the memory of a husband deserving, in other respects, of her affection; of whose talents and reputation she was justly proud, and whose name she shows herself solicitous in teaching her children to reverence with peculiar veneration. "Honour my memory," thus wrote she to Eugene and Hortense, under the apprehension of approaching death,—"honour my memory by cherishing my sentiments. I leave you, as an inheritance, the glory of your father and the name of your mother, whom some unfortunate beings will bear in remembrance; your father, whom I can praise with transport, engaged in the cause for which he perished on the scaffold with the best intentions, sincerely believing that he should achieve the conquest of liberty by obtaining

some concessions from a king whom he venerated and loved."

After an absence of several years, as is evident from the following simple and affecting narrative, Josephine returned alone to France, and in circumstances far otherwise than affluent. The recital was given to the ladies of her court at Navarre, to whom, at their own request, she had one day shown her jewels,—the most magnificent collection, be it remembered, in Europe. Observing the admiration bestowed upon "these dazzling inutilities," she addressed the junior members of her suite as follows:—"Believe me, my young friends, that splendour is not to be envied which does not constitute happiness. I shall doubtless very much surprise you, by saying that the gift of a pair of old shoes afforded me at one time greater satisfaction than all these diamonds now before you ever did." Here her youthful auditors could hardly refrain from visibly intimating their conjecture that this remark was intended as a pleasantry. Josephine's serious air assuring them of their mistake, they began, with one accord, to express their respectful desire of hearing the history of these famous shoes, which, to their imaginations, already promised greater wonders than the marvels of the glass-slipper.

"Yes, ladies," resumed their amiable mistress; "it is certain, that of all the presents I ever in my life received, the one which gave me the greatest pleasure was *a pair of old shoes—and these, too, of coarse leather!* This you will understand in the sequel.

"Quitting Martinico, I had taken a passage on board a ship, where we were treated with an attention which I shall never forget.* Having separated from my first husband, I was far from rich. Obliged to return to France on family affairs, the passage had absorbed the major part of my resources; and,

* This vessel, as will afterward appear, was the *Pomona* frigate.

indeed, not without much difficulty had I been able to provide the most indispensable requisites for our voyage. Hortense, obliging and lively, performing with much agility the dances of the negroes, and singing their songs with surprising correctness, greatly amused the sailors, who, from being her constant playfellows, had become her favourite society. No sooner did she observe me to be engaged, than, mounting upon deck, and there the object of general admiration, she repeated all her little exercises to the satisfaction of every one. An old quarter-master was particularly attached to the child; and whenever his duties permitted him a moment's leisure, he devoted the interval to his young friend, who, in turn, doted upon the old man. What with running, leaping, and dancing, my daughter's slight shoes were fairly worn out. Knowing she had not another pair, and fearing I would forbid her going upon deck should this defect in her attire be discovered, Hortense carefully concealed the disaster, and one day I experienced the distress of beholding her return, leaving every footmark in blood. Fearing some terrible accident, I asked, in affright, if she was hurt. 'No, mamma!'—'But see, the blood is streaming from your feet.'—'It is nothing, I assure you.' Upon examining how matters stood, I found the shoes literally in tatters, and her feet dreadfully torn by a nail. We were not yet more than halfway; and before reaching France it seemed impossible to procure another pair of shoes. I felt quite overcome at the idea of the sorrow my poor Hortense would suffer, as also at the danger to which her health might be exposed, by confinement in my miserable little cabin. We began to weep bitterly, and found no solace in our grief. At this moment entered our good friend the quarter-master, and, with honest bluntness, inquired the cause of our tears. Hortense, sobbing all the while, eagerly informed him that she would no more get upon deck, for her

shoes were worn out, and mamma had no others to give her. 'Nonsense,' said the worthy seaman; 'is that all? I have an old pair somewhere in my chest: I will go and seek them. You, madam, can cut them to the shape, and I'll splice them up again as well as need be. Shiver my timbers! on board ship you must put up with many things; we are neither landsmen nor fops, provided we have the necessary—*that's the most principal.*' Without giving time for a reply, away hastened the kind quarter-master in search of his old shoes. These he soon after brought to us with a triumphant air, and they were received by Hortense with demonstrations of the most lively joy. To work we set with all zeal, and before day closed my daughter could resume her delightful duties of supplying their evening's diversion to the crew. I again repeat, never was present accepted with greater thankfulness. It has since often been matter of self-reproach that I did not particularly inquire into the name and history of our benefactor, who was known on board only as Jacques. It would have been gratifying to me to have done something for him when, afterward means were in my power."

Such was the state of destitution in which the future empress reached, for the last time, the territory of France. Meanwhile, the commotion which overwhelmed that country, and shook European policy to the centre, had begun to be felt. This had, in fact, operated as a cause of Josephine's return. From the commencement of the Revolution, De Beauharnais had espoused its principles. In a woman's heart, as is well remarked by a female writer on this very subject, when old affection is once more awakened by the danger of its object, there is no longer room for past resentment. Josephine, knowing the warmth of her husband's political feelings, and trembling for his safety, anxiously hastened to be near and reconciled to him,—a reso-

lution in which she was encouraged by her excellent relative. The intercession of friends at home was hardly required to bring the vicomte to a sense of his duty,—for his was not the dissipation of a depraved heart; and this new proof of attachment, under such circumstances, called forth all his former love and admiration. So perfect was the reconciliation on the part of Madame de Beauharnais, that she even became the protector of her husband's natural daughter Adele, whom subsequently, under the empire, she settled advantageously in marriage.

Revolutionary principles—or, perhaps, more properly, principles of reform, which, as France then stood, could not be effected without revolution—may be said to have been in operation in that kingdom from the issue of the American contest in 1782. The example of the United States, the views and discourses of the officers who had served in the transatlantic warfare, spread throughout France the flame of republicanism. Financial distress conspired with these causes to fire this public ferment into a dangerous discontent, to which the government and privileged orders wanted ability to offer effectual opposition, or magnanimity to yield a just concession. The first overt acts of popular sentiment broke out in the recusancy of the Notables, in 1787, backed by that of the parliament of the year following. The grand struggle, however, between right and prerogative may be said to have fiercely closed with the assembling of the States General, in May, 1789. How far De Beauharnais had taken part in the previous contests does not appear; but in the "Constitutional Assembly," as it was afterward named, by way of pre-eminence, he took his seat among the 270 upper deputies, as representative for the nobles of Blois. On the commencement of proceedings, when the representatives of the third estate constituted themselves the National Assembly, and invited those of th clergy and nobles to

join them, De Beauharnais was one of the minority among the latter who, with the Duke of Orleans at their head, set the example of uniting themselves to the commons. In this, however, he neither followed exclusively his own principles, apart from the sentiments of his constituents, nor did he go all the lengths of the party with whom he acted. It is well known that a considerable portion of the deputies of the noblesse were far from supporting the exclusive principles of the order, but, on the contrary, had been instructed to act otherwise. Those of that body who thought at all perceived that their exclusive privileges and feudal restrictions, by throwing the members of the aristocracy out of the current of national improvement, had cast them behind both in wealth and intelligence. At the same time, in seeking a degree of reform in their own order, in desiring an equalization of privileges throughout the three estates, and in wishing to restrain or modify the royal prerogative, the moderate nobility were far from advocating any wild doctrines of democracy or equality. Of this class Josephine's husband seems to have been a faithful representative, with perhaps a dash of republicanism in his views. All his actions prove, that, like many others, the opening prospects of the Revolution had seduced him by the seeming good and fair which they presented, until he found himself too deeply engaged to retreat; induced, besides, as he was, to continue at the post assigned, in the hope of finally securing the welfare of the country. Such is the view which Josephine herself entertained, and has given, of his political character.

The labours of the Vicomte de Beauharnais in this first assembly consisted of reports and speeches. These must have possessed merit to have been remembered, and, what was then rarer still, moderation, since they were afterward turned against him on his own trial under Robespierre. On the dis-

solution of the Constitutional Assembly, or States General, September, 20, 1791, of which, by an unfortunate resolution,—"too simply honest,"—none of the members were immediately re-eligible, the vicomte resumed his original profession of arms, and was one of those who held an anxious eye upon the king, labouring to secure, at least, his personal safety. Accordingly, he was among those officers who, after the fatal 10th of August, 1792, stood by Lafayette, to whom he had been known, and, if we mistake not, had been his comrade, in the American campaigns.

On the dissolution (September 20th, 1792) of the Legislative Assembly, as the second revolutionary meeting of national representatives is termed, Beauharnais became a member of the third, or National Convention. Of this body we find, from the *Moniteur* of the time, that he was twice president. During the early part of the session, he appears to have shared actively in its discussions; and though little precise information has been preserved respecting his views, they appear, as formerly, to have been moderately republican, and in unison with the politics of the Girondists. On the trial and subsequent condemnation of the king, the voice of Beauharnais was consequently raised in favour of humanity, however hostile his proceedings might be to royalty, which one of the first acts of this assembly abolished by acclamation. It forms too faithful a picture of these fearful times, when the division of relative against relative, denounced by Scripture, was actually realized in France, to excite surprise that two brothers had espoused opposite sides. But it strikes as a remarkable coincidence in our present subject, to find Alexander Vicomte de Beauharnais, Josephine's husband, president of the Convention, and her brother-in-law, Francis Marquis de Beauharnais, a major-general in the army of Condé, petitioning to be permitted to plead the cause of Louis XVI.

before the bar of the same assembly. On the convocation of the States General, the marquis had been elected a member in the honourable situation of deputy from the nobles of Paris; he had subsequently emigrated, and it was from the camp of Condé on the Rhine that he addressed his letter, demanding to be heard for the king, in terms of the decree of the Convention, which granted that right to any Frenchman who might be honoured with the duty. It is well known, that of the very few magnanimous men willing to devote themselves to this perilous office, MM. Desèze, Tronchet, and Malesherbes were chosen by the king,—a circumstance which lessens not the merit of De Beauharnais's generous devotion. An autograph copy of the letter was most religiously preserved by Josephine, who, throughout her whole life, continued to cherish an affectionate regard for the writer. From the empress's copy, as published by Madame Duerest, to whom the original was confided, the following translation is here inserted as an interesting document of the times, and intimately connected with the subject of these Memoirs:—

*To the President of the National Convention.*

"Sir,—I learn, with Europe, astonished at the unheard-of crime, that the sacred person of the king is to be attainted by a criminal prosecution. I demand to be his defender—to plead the cause of my master—of my sovereign—of the most virtuous man in his kingdom. Be pleased to intimate this my wish to the Convention, and do me the favour to communicate the reply.

"I shall not in this letter indicate my means of defence. It is not here that I have to demonstrate what is the political right of a people over their lawful sovereign, and reciprocally what is the duty of princes towards their subjects. It is less before

a factious and usurping assembly, which has arrogated all power to itself, than before the French people, that I shall proclaim facts, proving to the nation both the crimes of those furious partisans of a liberty destructive of all social order, and the virtues of Louis XVI.,—of that unfortunate monarch, formed to be the object of his subjects' veneration; of him who, sad sport of faction, and guilty, perhaps, of too great goodness, has found himself by turns persecuted, betrayed, and, at last, basely abandoned by those whom he had loaded with his favours.

"At that public tribunal will I unveil the criminal plots of those political knaves who have seized the reins of government, and under pretext of public weal more effectually cloak their own ambitious designs. These grand criminals I will expose, and unravel the tortuous course of a policy dangerous to all governments. The National Convention may judge how dearly I value the signal distinction of defending my king, since I shrink not from confronting rebels face to face; since I blush not to beseech that tribunal of inquisition to concede to me this especial grace.

"The anarchy into which the Revolution has plunged my unhappy country, the crimes with which it has sullied a portion of the French nation, its crimes towards the royal family, its persecutions of the ministers of the altar, and, above all, the desire, so natural to every subject, of serving his prince, and rescuing him from assassins,—such are the motives which have removed me from France. This voluntary devotedness, which I share with a vast number of my virtuous fellow-citizens, is a distinction of which I am proud. Of these my motives, sir, you may inform the assembly.

"After opposing, with my utmost ability, the destruction of the monarchy, as a member of that minority of the National Assembly with whom

constantly to have acted is to me a subject of high gratulation, I have rallied beneath the standard of honour to die a soldier,—having solemnly protested as a citizen against that same constitution which you swore to maintain, and which, nevertheless, you have already superseded by your own authority.

"From you, sir, I expect a straightforward and concise reply: cover at least, your criminal intentions under the justice which I solicit, and which every one who is accused has a right to demand. If you have forgotten that Louis XVI. is a king, remember that he is a man; show your impartiality in a cause which affects all governments—upon which Europe, in deep attention, suspends judgment, and whose every circumstance posterity will hold in precious remembrance. I have the honour to be,

"Francis Marquis de Beauharnais."

While the brother-in-law of Josephine thus devoted his zeal to the royal cause, her husband continued to sit as one of the judges in the proceedings which soon after brought the king to the block. This execrable crime having roused to just and more energetic hostility the alarmed humanity of all Europe, the revolutionary leaders, from the impossibility of finding military experience among their own immediate order, were constrained to employ in important commands the few nobles who adhered to the general cause of the Revolution. In this emergency, the German frontier was assigned to Vicomte Beauharnais, a station, though not so illustrious in peril as it afterward became, already one of glory and exertion, and whose duties the following official despatch shows him to have discharged neither as an unskilful nor inactive soldier:—

*To the National Convention.*

"Head-quarters, Landau, 20th July, 1793.

"I have to inform you, citizen-representatives,

that on the night of the 19th, I quitted the position on the heights of Menfeld, in order to take up another nearer Landau; and, at the same time, to attack the enemy encamped in the vicinity of that place. I directed the army to advance in six columns, three of which were destined for false attacks. The principal object was to obtain possession of the passes of Anweiller, and the heights of Frankweiller, in front of these passes; and upon which the enemy lay strongly intrenched. Every thing succeeded to my wish. General Arlandes, with the 10th regiment of infantry, seized the pass of Anweiller; General Meynier, at the head of the 67th, occupied at the same instant Alberweiller and the various defiles leading therefrom; the vanguard, led on by Generals Landremont, Loubat, and Delmas, repulsed the enemy with loss from the heights of Frankweiller, which were guarded by the emigrants and the free corps of Wurmser.

"General Gilot, making a sortie with three thousand of the brave garrison of Landau, in order to occupy the enemy's attention at a point where his line rested upon a wood, proved successful in that quarter. The false attacks directed by General Ferrière, and those of the brigades of Generals Lafarelle and Mequillet, on the respective points of the hostile line, occasioned a diversion highly favourable to the main attack, by causing the evacuation of the villages of Betheim, Kintelsheim, and Ottersheim. Everywhere the enemies of the republic have been driven back with loss, and have left, contrary to their practice, the field covered with their dead and wounded. We made some prisoners, and have captured several redoubts, without cannon, it is true, but in which our brave soldiers found bread, great-coats, and supplies of various kinds.

"This action, so fortunate in its results, since the troops of the republic have successfully effected what I had proposed, gives anticipation of still more

important advantages. My communications with the army of the Moselle have meanwhile been established by the country of Deuxponts; and the courage of the republicans composing the army of the Rhine promises to become more and more worthy of national confidence, by fulfilling those engagements which that army, by its situation and force, and through the interests of the important city now besieged, had contracted with the country. I am yet unable to speak in detail of those individual achievements which merit the attention of the representatives of the people, and in a free state call for an expression of national gratitude; but my next letter will contain the necessary particulars.

"I request you again to accept, from all the republicans of the army of the Rhine, the homage of fidelity to the republic, one and indivisible, of their attachment to the constitution, and of their gratitude to the estimable legislators to whom that constitution is owing.

"The commander-in-chief of the army of the Rhine.

(Signed) "ALEXANDER BEAUHARNAIS."

The reader will not fail to remark in this letter a solicitude to bespeak the praise of republicanism, and in the signature all absence of aristocracy, even to the omission of the *de*, then a very obnoxious monosyllable, as (in the language of the time) "it seemed to assert that a man could have pretensions to a grandfather." The only stay which Beauharnais, and those of his order, possessed among the men of the Revolution—fear of their remaining political power—shortly after the date of this despatch was completely removed. The arrest of the Girondist deputies of the Convention, on the 2d June, 1793, and the total destruction of that party in the autumn of the same year, threw uncontrolled sway into the hands of the Jacobins. The reader

need hardly be reminded that the party of the Gironde numbered in its ranks those who, at this period of fearful profligacy among the estimable legislators of France, still cultivated the humanities of a civilized people. All men of respectability, some of them enlightened by extraordinary learning and many highly gifted in genuine eloquence, the Girondists attracted to their opinions the largest share of the intelligence, and all the moderation, of the kingdom. But, unfortunately, instead of maintaining from the first those rational views of liberty, under a limited monarchy, to which they subsequently inclined, they got among the speculative impossibilities of a "pure republic," and were thus drawn into excesses, in the vain hope of educing good from evil,—pu[illegible] from pollution; they suffered thus to be wrenched from their grasp by ruffian force that practical influence through which they had held the means of saving their sovereign and themselves. The downfall of this party necessarily drew along with it the ruin of all those who participated in its principles, especially when its members were replaced by the Jacobins of the provinces and the commune of Paris,—a mob the least humane and the most cowardly in the annals of crime.

One of the earliest acts of the democracy was to exclude from the service of the republic every functionary, whether civil or military, of noble birth. Among the rest, Beauharnais, the predecessor of Moreau, and not unworthy of being classed with that general, Custrine, Dumouriez, Hoche, and Houchard, in talent, was deprived of his command. Of the officers thus dismissed, most fled into foreign parts; some of less note, by their very obscurity, afterward recovered their consequence; but no commander-in-chief, except the Vicomte Beauharnais, ventured to return to France. Dismissal from such a station under the circumstances obviously ought to have been construed as a decree of expatriation.

When warned on this head, the latter, with unsuspicious honesty, ill suited to the times, replied, "I am a friend to the republic; what, then, can I have to fear from friends?" and, with imprudent confidence, took up his residence in the family mansion at Paris. But Beauharnais, the friend and soldier of the republic, was speedily arrested by the satellites of Robespierre, and consigned to the prisons of the Luxembourg. Of a specific charge for such proceeding we find not even a shadow, beyond the crimes affecting many hundreds under like suspicions —rank and merit. Nor hardly can the reader expect any very intelligible ground of accusation in this case, when it is recollected, that barely to be denounced as an aristocrat converted the most respectable citizen into a criminal: the more respectable, in fact, the more likely to be accused. Instances are actually on record, where a more decent dress than the ruffianism of the republicans had introduced brought the wearer to the guillotine. We find, indeed, that when Beauharnais had been some time in prison, an attempt was made to implicate him in a conspiracy alleged to have been entered into by the captives in the Luxembourg; but for his original incarceration no reason is assigned. But if our information is thus vague respecting the particular offence, the letters of Josephine render us minutely acquainted, not only with the circumstances of the arrest and conduct of her husband, but present a graphic and, from its domestic nature, moving record of that fatal period. These letters were written from Paris to Fontainbleau, and addressed to Madame Fanny Beauharnais, the vicomte's aunt, who then resided on a small property in the neighbourhood. This lady acquired a celebrity by her writings and literary talents, which she retained under the empire, and in the imperial court her conversational powers were admired both for their brilliancy and solidity, though with more dis

play than perhaps beseemed the retirement of the female character. To her account, also, is placed the famous couplet,—

Eglé jeune et poète a deux petits travers:
Elle fait son visage, et ne fait pas ses vers.

Young, and a poet; Eglé's faults, then, say?
Just two,—she makes her face, but steals her lay.

This satire, however, at least in English prose, is as old as the age of Queen Anne. It is now of small moment to determine the originality either of the lady's beauty or of her poetry; suffice it, that she possessed an excellent heart, and was ever regarded by Josephine with the most tender respect.

*Josephine to Madame Fanny Beauharnais.*

"Ah, my dear aunt, compassionate—console—counsel me. Alexander is arrested; while I write, he is led away to the Luxembourg!

"Two days ago, a man of ill-omened aspect was seen prowling around our house. Yesterday, about three o'clock, the porter was interrogated whether citizen Beauharnais had returned from St. Germain. Now, you know, aunt, that my husband has not been at St. Germain since the month of May. You were of the party, and may recollect that Cubières read to us some verses on the Pavilion of Luciennes. The same inquisitor reappeared in the evening, accompanied by an old man of huge stature, morose, and rude, who put several questions to the porter. 'You are sure it is Beauharnais the vicomte?'—'Ci-devant vicomte,' replied our servant.—'The same who formerly presided in the Assembly?'—'I believe so.'—'And who is a general officer?'—'The same, sir,' said the porter.—'Sir!' sharply interrupted the inquirer, and addressing his companion, who had said nothing, 'you see the cask always smells of the herring.' Upon this they disappeared.

"'To-day, about eight in the morning, I was told some one wished to speak with me. This was a young man, of a gentle and decent appearance: he carried a leather bag in which were several pairs of shoes. 'Citizen,' said the man to me, 'I understand you want socks of plum-gray?' I looked at my woman, Victorine, who was present, but she comprehended as little of this question as I did. The young man seemed painfully disconcerted; he kept turning a shoe in his hand, and fixed upon me a mournful look. At length, approaching close, he said, in an under tone, 'I have something to impart to you, madam.' His voice, his looks, and a sigh which half-escaped him caused me some emotion. 'Explain yourself,' I replied eagerly; 'my servant is faithful.'—'Ah!' exclaimed he, as if involuntarily, 'my life is at stake in this matter.' I arose instantly, and dismissed Victorine with a message to call my husband.

"'Madam,' said the young tradesman, when we were alone, 'there is not a moment to lose, if you would save M. de Beauharnais. The revolutionary committee, last night, passed a resolution to have him arrested, and at this very moment the warrant is making out.' I felt as if ready to swoon away. 'How know you this?' demanded I, trembling violently.—'I am one of the committee,' said he, casting down his eyes; 'and being a shoemaker, I thought these shoes would afford me a reasonable pretext for advertising you, madam.' I could have embraced the good young man. He perceived that I wept, and I believe tears stood in his own eyes. At this moment Alexander entered: I threw myself into his arms. 'You see my husband,' said I to the shoemaker.—'I have the honour of knowing him,' was the reply.

"Your nephew, learning the service which we had received, wished to reward him on the spot. This offer was declined in a manner which augmented

our esteem. Alexander held out his hand, which the young man took with respect, but without embarrassment. Spite of our solicitations, Alexander refused to flee. 'With what can they charge me?' asked he; 'I love liberty; I have borne arms for the Revolution; and had that depended upon me, the termination would have been in favour of the people.'—'But you are a noble,' answered the young man, 'and that is a crime in the eyes of revolutionists,—it is an irreparable misfortune.'—'Which they can charge as a crime,' added I; 'and moreover, they accuse you of having been one in the Constitutional Assembly.'—'My friend,' replied Alexander, with a noble expression, and firm tone, 'such is my most honourable title to glory—the only claim, in fine, which I prefer. Who would not be proud of having proclaimed the rights of the nation, the fall of despotism, and the reign of the laws?'—'What laws!' exclaimed I: 'it is in blood they are written. —'Madam,' said the young man, with an accent such as he had not yet employed, 'when the tree of liberty is planted in an unfriendly soil, it must be watered with the blood of its enemies.' Beauharnais and I looked at each other; in the young man, whom nature had constituted with so much feeling, we recognised the revolutionist whom the new principles had been able to render cruel.

"Meanwhile, time elapsed; he took leave of us, repeating to my husband, 'Within an hour it will no longer be possible to withdraw yourself from search. I wished to save, because I believe you innocent: such was my duty to humanity; but if I am commanded to arrest you,—pardon me; I shall do my duty, and you will acknowledge the patriot. In you I have ever beheld an honourable man—a noble and generous heart; it is impossible, therefore, that you should not also be a good citizen.'

"When our visiter had departed, 'Such,' said Alexander to me, 'are the prejudices with which our

youth are poisoned. The blood of the nobles, of those even the most devoted to the new ideas, must nourish liberty. If these new men of the Revolution were only cruel and turbulent, this sanguinary thirst, this despotic rage, would pass away; but they are systematic, and Robespierre has reduced revolutionary action into a doctrine. The movement will cease only when its enemies, real or presumed, are annihilated, or when its author shall be no more. But this is an ordeal which must, in the end, strengthen liberty; she will ferment and work herself clear in blood.'—'You make me shudder,' said I to Alexander; 'can you speak thus and not flee?' —'Whither flee?' answered my husband; 'is there a vault, a garret, a hiding-place into which the eye of the tyrant does not penetrate? do you reflect that he sees with the eyes of forty thousand committees animated by like dispositions, and strong in his will? The torrent rolls along, and the people, throwing themselves into it, augment its force. We must yield: if I be condemned, how escape? if I be not, free or in prison, I have nothing to fear.' My tears, my entreaties were vain. At a quarter before twelve three members of the revolutionary committee made their appearance, and our house was filled with armed men.

"Think you my young cordwainer formed one in this band? You are not deceived, and his functions there were painful to me. I confess, however, that I beheld him exercise these with a sort of satisfaction. He it was who signified to Alexander the order placing him under arrest, which he did with equal urbanity and firmness. In the midst of a crisis so grievous to me, I could not help observing in this young man a tone of authority and of decency which placed him in striking contrast with his two colleagues. One of these, the same old inquisitor who the night previously had made it his business to inquire concerning the presence and occupations of

my husband, was once a planter in Martinico, and who, despite of *equality*, has never beheld in the human species but two classes,—masters and slaves. His present opinion is, that the Revolution will be brought to a happy conclusion only when its agents shall have reduced all its enemies to the condition of the negroes of Senegal when exported into America; and to accomplish this end, he demands that the whole race of priests, nobles, proprietors, philosophers, and, in short, all the aristocratic classes, be despatched to St. Domingo, there to replace the caste of the blacks, suppressed by the Revolution. 'Thus,' added the ferocious wretch, addressing his words to me with a sinister glance directed from his sunken eyes, 'thus the true republicans secure the grand moral triumph, by measures of profound and elevated policy!' His third compeer, vulgar and brutal, busied himself in taking, in a blustering way, an inventory of the principal pieces of furniture and papers. From these latter he made a selection, collecting the pieces into a parcel, which was sealed and forwarded to the committee. The choice chiefly included reports and discourses pronounced by Alexander in the Constitutional Assembly. This meeting, held in horror by the revolutionists, is not less odious to the aristocrats of all classes and shades. Does not this prove that that assembly had resolved all the problems of the Revolution, and, as respects liberty, had founded all the necessary establishments? From the regime of 1789 it had taken away all means; from that of 1793 it removed all hope. Alexander has often repeated to me, that to neither there remained any chance of rising, save by violence and crime. Ah! why did he foresee so justly, and why would he, to the title of a prophet, perhaps add that of a martyr?"

In her distress, Josephine appears, from the following note, to have experienced the usual hollow-

ness of "summer friends." The letter from her husband is exceedingly descriptive of the unaccountable recklessness into which the times had converted the national buoyancy of temper,—a feature, both in the oppressors and the victims, singularly characteristic of the Revolution.

*Josephine to Madame Fanny de Beauharnais.*

"Why do the kind proceedings of your friends, and your own bad health, detain you in the country? Dear aunt, I miss you much. Think of my house solitary, myself more solitary—more forsaken still. In the course of the five days since *he* was taken from me, all his friends have disappeared, one by one. At this moment when I sit down to write, it is six o'clock in the evening, and nobody has come here. Nobody? I am wrong: my excellent young man does not stand aloof; he comes twice or thrice in the day with news from the Luxembourg. Provided his duty be not compromised, he cares little about exposing his person; the pestilence of misfortune does not keep him at a distance. Alexander confides to him those letters which he desires I only should read; his jailers, the committee, have the first perusal of the others. Enclosed I send you a copy of one;—the original shall repose all my life nearest my heart, and be buried with me."

*Vicomte de Beauharnais, to Josephine.*

"So! *pauvre petite*, you are still unreasonable, and *I* must needs console *you?* That, however, I can easily do; for even here is the abode of peace when the conscience is tranquil, and where one can cultivate for one's self and others all the benevolent sentiments of the heart, all the best qualities of the spirit, all the gentle affections of our nature. I should be troubled at our separation, were it to be

long; but I am a soldier; and at a distance from you, my sweet Josephine, removed from our dear children, I bethink myself of war; in truth, a slight misadventure is a campaign against misfortune. Ah! if you knew how we learn to combat our mischance here, you would blush for having been afflicted. Every captive—now this is literally the case—leaves his sorrows at the grated entrance, and shows within only good-humour and serenity. We have transported to the Luxembourg the entire of society, excepting politics; thus, you will grant me that we have left the thorns in order to gather the roses. We have here charming women, who are neither prudes nor coquettes; old men, who neither carp nor moralize, and who demean themselves kindly; men of mature age, who are not projectors; young men, almost reasonable; and artists, well bred, sober, without pride, amuse us by a number of pleasant facts, and entertaining anecdotes; and, what will astonish you more than all the rest, we have moneyed men, become as polite and obliging as they were generally vulgar and impertinent. We have here, then, all that is best, always excepting my Josephine and our dear children. Oh! the choice—the good—the best, compose that cherished trio. I ought likewise to except our good friend Nevil; the only fault in him is his notion of relationship to Brutus. As to his title of committee-man, I have no reproach to make on that score; I find it too much in my favour. He is the messenger, my beloved friend, who will convey to you this letter, in which I enclose one thousand kisses, until such time as I shall be able more substantially to deliver them myself, and without counting."

This letter is pleasing in itself, as expressive of real affection. But the scenes which it describes as passing in a prison, whence was taken a daily portion of the sixty or eighty victims, immolated, for a

length of time, to the indiscriminate fears or insatiable cruelty of Robespierre, might seem fabricated, or well intended misrepresentations, to sooth the anxiety of friends without, did not the narrative in itself supply but an additional evidence of a fact already established. During this Reign of Terror, the prisoners usually heard their sentence amid pastime and laughter, which they interrupted only till their own, or the names of their associates, had been called over in the executioner's roll, again to commence their hideous and reckless levities. This was then mistaken for, and is even still dignified as, courage. With equal justice might we elevate into fortitude the brutish insensibility of those poor wretches, who, when their ship has struck, seek, in mad plunder and intoxication, to lose the sense of that situation which they cannot resolve to meet. The appalling inconsistency of rational beings confronting death, surrounded by the vain jests and follies of life, is a horrible characteristic of the French revolutionists. This they termed freedom from weakness and superstition. Alas, how very weak is man in his own strength! Under how many unsuspected shapes does the dread phantom Superstition rear itself in every age! Here was one of its most appalling forms. Men recoiling from the solitude, and gloom, and hidden tears created in their hearts by infidelity, called to each other in the jibberings of insensate mirth, that they might fill without thought the pause between time and eternity

> ——Speak—let me hear thy voice;
> Mine own affrights me with its echoes!

## CHAPTER II.

Josephine's Charities—Note—Letter to her Aunt—Examination of her Husband—The ludicrous and horrible of Revolutionary Justice—Letter from Josephine—Affecting Interview—Eugene—Hortense—Letter—Villany of the Revolutionary Spies—Conversation betrayed—Pretended Conspiracy of M. de Beauharnais—Letter from Josephine—Examination of her Children—Another Letter—Her Interview with the Committee—Anecdotes—Dungeons of the Committee—Letter to her Husband—Anecdotes—Delusions—Reply—Robespierre—Josephine's Arrest—Affecting Details—Horrible Prison—Anecdotes—Dispersion of the Beauharnais Family.

Soon after her husband's imprisonment, Josephine appears to have retired for a brief space from Paris, most probably on a visit to Fontainbleau. A note of this date is still extant, in which she gives directions to her "faithful Victorine to open a secret drawer in the vicomte's scrutoire, which had escaped the inquisitors, and to secure the papers it contained." The following passage evinces that Josephine, in her severe and homefelt adversity, had not forgotten those whom her own kindness of heart had placed as dependants on her bounty. "I presume that my absence has made no change in the order of the distributions; I wish them to be continued as usual. Victorine will give two portions to Dame Marguerite, for I have learned that she has become burdened with the charge of a grandson—a circumstance which she did not mention to me." At this distressful period, there were numbers of children and females who, having lost, through imprisonment or death, their natural protectors, and falling thus from a state of respectability at once into indigence, wi hout those humbling gradations which break down the spirit, would have perished in the garrets and cellars whither they had retreated, but for such gentle ministrations as here noted. In these charities, Josephine's exer-

tions were unremitting, and enabled her, with but a moderate income, to do much good. Her pensioners were supplied, not with money, but with food, soup, bread, and, if the necessities of ill health required, with meat and wine; while, by interesting her friends in the cause, she obtained work for those deserted beings, and so enabled them, by their own labours—the sweetest of all resources—to minister to their own wants. Several lived to bless Josephine on a throne for a life thus preserved by her bounty, when she herself had been little removed from a prison.

Confident in the innocence of her husband, and more inclined to entertain hope, from ignorance of the characters of those in power, Josephine, like many other victims of similar delusions, appears at first to have regarded with little apprehension the issue of De Beauharnais's imprisonment. The following playful note to Dr. Portal, a worthy physician, lately alive, seems to have been written in this happy mood:—

"Quick, good doctor, run to the committee of superintendence, and you will receive permission to enter the Luxembourg. There you will find one of your favourites, who, spite of his situation, has not forgotten his engagement with you to be sick at least fifteen days in the twelvemonth. The pledge is now to be redeemed—but not an hour more than the fortnight—you understand me, doctor,—as you shall answer on your head. That would even be a great deal too long were Alexander at liberty; but in prison, a little nursing helps to pass the time when it does not kill the patient, and, besides, an agreeable physician amuses both complaint and complainer. "J. DE B."

Perhaps, too, the examination of her husband had tended, about this time, further to reassure Madame

de Beauharnais. Her own letter, which follows, on this subject, while it is an extremely curious document of the times, and explains some circumstances in the political career of the vicomte, makes us shudder to think that the lives of thirty millions of men were in such hands, or that, in the particular instance, such mockery should have been consummated on the scaffold.

*Josephine to her Aunt.*

"Alexander has been examined to-day, and to-morrow I shall have permission to visit him. The president of the committee is a good enough man, but void of all energy; whom I know not how many quintals of fat deprive of movement, ideas, and almost of speech. With the best intentions in the world, he has less authority than the meanest clerk in his office. He arrives late, gets to his chair puffing and blowing, falls down heavily, and, when at length he is seated, remains a quarter of an hour without speaking. Meanwhile a secretary reads reports which he does not hear, though affecting to listen; sometimes he falls asleep during the reading, —a circumstance which prevents not his awaking just in time to sign what he has neither heard nor understood. As to the examinations which he commences, and which all of his colleagues continue, there are some atrocious, a great number ridiculous, but all more or less curious. What, indeed, can be more remarkable than to behold its highest orders interrogated before those who, notwithstanding their elevation, are but the dregs of society? My dear aunt, when I speak thus, understand me to make no reference to birth, fortune, or privileges; but to sentiment, conduct, and principles.

"Enclosed I send you an outline of my husband's examination, in which, as you will perceive, the ridiculous contends with the horrible. Such are the two features of our era."

"*President.*—Who are you?

*M. de Beauharnais.*—A man, and a Frenchman.

*President.*—None of your gibes here! I demand your name.

*M. de B.*—Eugene-Alexander de Beauharnais.

*A Member.*—No *de*, if you please; it is too aristocratic.

*M. de B.*—Feudal, you would say. It is certain, a name without the particle would be more rational. The offence, if it be one, comes of time and my ancestors.

*Another Member.*—Ah! so you have got ancestors! The confession is an honest one; it is well to know as much. Note *that*, citizens; he has a grandfather, and makes no secret of it. [Here nine of the twelve members composing the committee fell a-laughing. One of those who, amid the general gayety, had maintained an appearance of seriousness, called out, in a loud tone, 'Fools! who does not know that ancestors are old musty parchments? Is it this man's fault if his credentials have not been burned? Citizen, I advise thee to bestow them here with the committee, and I give thee the assurance that a good bonfire shall soon render us an account of thine ancestors.' Here a ridiculous laughter took possession of the entire of the honourable council, and not without much difficulty could the fat president recall them to a sense of decorum. At the same time, this explosion of hilarity having put him into good-humour, he politely requested the accused to be seated. Again he was interrupted by a member calling him to order, for having used the plural to a suspected citizen. Hereupon the uproar began anew more violently than ever, from the word *Monsieur* having been applied to the president by the member as a joke. Order once more established, my husband embraced the first moment of silence to felicitate the members on the innocent nature of their discussions, and to congratulate himself in

having for judges magistrates of such a joyous disposition.]

*President, with an important air.*—Dost take our operations for farces? Thou art prodigiously deceived. The suspected citizen is right, colleagues, in calling us his judges; that title ought to restore us to gravity. Formerly, it was permitted to laugh, now we must be serious.

*M. de B.*—Such is the distinction between the old and new regime.

*President.*—Proceed we then seriously, and continue the examination. Citizen Jarbac (to one of the secretaries), be'st thou there?—(*To M. de B.*) Thy titles and qualities?

*M. de B.*—A French citizen, and a general in the service of the republic.

*A Member.*—President, he does not declare all; he was formerly a—

*Another Member.*—A prince or a baron, at least.

*M. de B., smiling.*—Only a vicomte, if so please you, and quite enough, too.

*President.*—Enough! it is a great deal too much: so you confess being a noble.

*M. de B.*—I confess that so men called me, and so, for some time, I believed, under the reign of ignorance, habit, and prejudice.

*President.*—Acknowledge also that you are not yet entirely disabused.

*M. de B.*—The obstinacy of some men who persist in combating a chimera preserves for such things a sort of reality. As for myself, I have long regarded the illusion as dissipated. Reason had taught me that there could exist no distinctions save those which result from virtue, talent, or service; a sound policy has since demonstrated to me that there ought to exist none others.

*Citizen Nevil.*—That I call reasoning from principle.

*President.*—Without denying the consequences,

whence has the accused derived these principles? From the Constitutional Assembly!

*M. de B.*—I consider it an honour to have been a member of that assembly.

*President.*—Did you not even preside there?

*M. de B.*—Yes, citizen; and at an ever memorable era.

*President.*—That was,—after the flight of the tyrant?

*M. de B.*—That was on the occasion of the journey of Louis XVI. to Varennes, and on his return.

*A Member.*—For a bet, the citizen does not consider Louis Capet to have been a tyrant.

*M. de B.*—History will explain, and posterity will pronounce.

*Citizen Nevil.*—The question here is not what citizen Beauharnais thinks, but what he has done.

*President.*—Just—most just: see we, then, what citizen Beauharnais has done.

*M. de B.*—Nothing; and *that* in a distempered time, I conceive to have been the best of all proceedings.

*President.*—Thus you declared for no party?

*M. de B.*—No—if by party you mean factions which hate each other, rend the state, and impede the reign of the laws, and the strengthening of the republic; but yes—if by party you understand the immense majority of the French people who desire independence and liberty: of that party am I.

*A Member.*—It remains to be known through what means of adherence?

*M. de B.*—I should prefer, in order to persuade, the means employed by reason,—to convince those of sentiment; against anarchy, by turns the cause and the effect of factions, I nevertheless believe that it is not forbidden to employ force. But I require that it be used so as not to be abused; that men have recourse to it rarely, and that they yield to humanity whatever they can take from severity without compromising the safety of the state.

*A Member* (it was the old wretch charged with the arrest of my husband).—Humanity! humanity! In certain mouths, such language is suspected.

*M. de B.*—And ought to be so, if it signify pity for wilful criminals; but it is respectable when invoked in favour of inexperience and error.

*A Member.*—Such is the tone held by all moderates.

*M. de B.*—Moderation is the daughter of reason, and the mother of power; why should I be violent and agitated, if, in a sound state of mind, I feel myself vigorous through calmness, and powerful by wisdom?

*Nevil.*—I assure you, citizens, that neither Rousseau, nor Mably, nor Montesquieu ever wrote any thing more sensible.

*A Member.*—Who are these people? do they beong to the section?

*Another Member.*—Don't you see they are Feuillans? All that has the smack of moderatism, and is not worth a ——.

*President.*—You are all wrong, citizens; these are authors of the reign of Louis XIV., and you may see their tragedies played every night at the Theatre Français."

"Here a new uproar ensued, some defending, others impugning, these novel discoveries in literary history. My husband would have smiled in derision, had he not sighed to think in whose hands the fate of his fellow-citizens had thus been placed. Nevil, by labouring to bring back the debate to its proper object, endeavoured to terminate a sitting equally painful and ludicrous. After some more absurd and irrelevant interrogatories, the president decided for the provisional detention of Alexander. 'Time will thus be afforded,' so concluded his address, with revolutionary forethought, 'for convicting you: and you, citizen, will have leisure for your defence. If you love your country, you can serve it as well by your resignation as by your activity; and if

liberty be dear to you, it will become much more so in a prison. Thereupon, I remit you, not as culpable—God forbid! but as one who may become guilty. You will be inscribed upon the registers of the Luxembourg merely with this favourable remark: *Convicted of being suspected!*'

The storm was thus rapidly thickening round De Beauharnais; even the long-sought interview to which Josephine alludes in her last letter proved in the end a means in the scheme of villany. The vicomte had petitioned to see his wife and children in the prison of the Luxembourg,—a favour at length extended to him through the instrumentality of Louis, deputy from the Lower Rhine, one of the associates of Robespierre, but who, unlike his principal, held still some communion with human feelings, and to whom Nevil, "the constant and indefatigable," had applied. The details of this meeting, the last save one which she ever enjoyed with the husband of her youth, are exquisitely given in the following letter from Josephine to her aunt:—

"This has been a day at once very delightful and very painful. My husband having desired to see us, I resolved, in order to spare their young feelings, to send the children first, and Nevil took charge of them for this purpose. They had for some time been told that their father, being sick, was under the care of a famous physician, who, on account of the salubrity of the air and the spacious buildings, resided in the Luxembourg. The first interview passed over pretty well; only Hortense remarked that papa's apartments were extremely small, and the patients very numerous. At the time I arrived they had left their father, a kind-hearted turnkey, gained by Nevil, having taken the precaution to keep them removed. They had gone to visit in the neighbouring cells, whose inmates were touched by their youth,

their situation, and their ingenuousness. I dreaded the sight of our mutual emotion: our interview took place in their absence. Alexander, who supports his captivity with courage, showed himself unable to bear up against my tears. Recovering myself at length, and alarmed at seeing him so greatly moved, I constrained my own sorrow, and endeavoured in turn to sooth his. Our children now made their appearance. This brought on a new crisis, the more painful that we felt its cause must be dissembled.

"Hortense, who is sincerity itself, was for long deceived, and in all the tenderness of an affectionate heart, wished to persuade us that we acted wrong in afflicting ourselves, since papa's illness was not dangerous. All this while poor Hortense exhibited that slight air of incredulous hesitation which you know becomes her so well: 'Do *you* believe that papa is ill?' said she to her brother; 'if so, at least, it is not the sickness which the doctors cure.'—'What do you mean, my dear girl,' asked I; 'can you suppose that papa and I would contrive between us to deceive you?'—'Pardon, mamma, but I do think so.'—'Oh! sister,' eagerly interrupted Eugene, 'that is a very singular speech of yours!'—'On the contrary,' replied she, 'it is quite simple and natural.'—'How, miss?' said I, in my turn, affecting severity.—'Unquestionably,' continued the little sly one, 'good parents are permitted to deceive their children when they wish to spare them uneasiness; is it not so, mamma?' At these words, she threw herself upon my bosom, and, putting one arm round her father's neck, drew him gently towards us. A smile shone through her tears; and Eugene, mingling his caresses in this domestic scene, rendered the whole truly affecting. Amiable and gentle child, he shows as much singleness of heart as his sister displays penetration and spirit. Both have hitherto formed our joy: why should it be, that, at this crisis, they

mitted,' such were his words to Eugene, 'it is even a duty to resist oppression; but prudence ought to direct force, and he who would subvert or subdue tyranny must beware of disclosing his designs.'—To explain to you how these words, which we conceived were heard by ourselves alone, reached the ears of spies, would be difficult for me; and now that I reflect upon the circumstance, the disclosure appears still more mysterious. At first we suspected Nevil; but you will conceive with what indignation against ourselves we repelled a suspicion which, for the moment, forced itself upon our alarmed fancy. One of the saddest miseries of adversity is, that it renders men unjust, awakening doubts of the sincerity of friendship, so rarely given to misfortune. In thinking the best of the conduct of that excellent young man I did well; for it is still through his means that I am able to transmit you the following details:—I am thus completely ignorant by whom or in what manner we have been betrayed.

"As soon as the Revolutionary Committee had knowledge of my poor Alexander's remark, they intercepted all communication between him and the other prisoners; and, which has thrown us into greater consternation still, between him and his family. On the morrow he was shut up in his chamber, which fortunately opens upon a small corridor communicating with a second apartment, at present unoccupied, an arrangement which, hitherto unobserved, triples the space for exercise. Two days after, the doors were thrown open, and he received the very unexpected visit of a member of the Committee of General Safety. The visiter was Vadier, his colleague in the Constitutional Assembly,—a gray-headed, suspicious ruffian, who follows the dictates of habitual misanthropy, and with whom suspicions are equivalent to proofs. In the tone assumed with my husband, the latter instantly recognised prejudice and personal hatred, and shrunk

from penetrating farther. As for myself, the bare idea causes me to shudder, and were I to dwell upon the thought for a moment, I feel that terror would freeze my heart.

"'Without inquiring,' answered Alexander, 'by what means you have discovered my thoughts, I am very far from disavowing the maxim which you repeat after me, or the principles you attribute to me. Is not the entire theory of the Revolution comprehended in these ideas? do they not teach a doctrine which its friends have reduced to practice? are not these principles yours also?'—'All that I grant,' replied Vadier; 'but times, places, persons, change all; and a truth of this nature, admirable as it may be in speculation, becomes a dagger when men know not how to use it; it is a two-edged weapon, which we have done well in directing against the enemies of liberty: but if it so happen that those who have been wounded, though not prostrated, essay to turn it against the defenders of freedom,—if, in such a retrograde and criminal movement, they were guided by one of those arms which had combated them, and which, in protecting them to-day, desired to avenge their wounds of the past,—say, would such a one be guiltless? would the intentions he obeyed be pure? or, could too great severity be exercised to prevent the effect rather than have to punish the consequences?'—'In these dangerous and forced deductions,' answered M. de B., 'I recognise the doctrine of your master. Upon deceitful hypotheses you may base at will the scaffolding of any propositions, however absurd; and, arguing from the possible to the positive, you deliver the innocent to punishment, as the means of preventing them from guilt.'—'Whoever is suspected,' was the atrocious reply, 'deserves suspicion.'—'Speak more honestly at once,' replied your nephew: 'whoever is innocent soon falls under suspicion; and, once suspected, he perishes; if it be imagined that his

innocence may waver, you quickly punish him as a criminal.'—'You press the consequence rather from feeling than reason,' returned Vadier; 'we designate and treat as criminal him only who impedes or corrupts the principles of the Revolution. Would you have spoken out had not the anti-revolutionary doctrines, in despite of us, and even without our knowledge, refuted you? Wo to the guilty who compromise themselves!'—'Wo, rather,' cried my husband, 'wo to those tyrants who explain, or rather who mystify, by an insidious and crafty sophistry, their system of manslaughter! we may easily put aside the thrust which is aimed at us in honest hostility; and, as the President du Harlay remarks, a mighty space interposes between the heart of the good man and the poniard of the miscreant. But how avoid the stab dealt in darkness? there is no remedy; we must be silent, and bare the throat.' At these words, which I much blame, the old President of the General Safety Committee left the prison; and Nevil, who had been listening in the corridor, imagined he remarked in his naturally stern countenance an indescribable expression of the most sinister import. I shall keep you daily informed of the consequences of this affair, which fills me with inexpressible alarm."

Josephine's inquietude was but too well founded, considering only the characters of the oppressors, and the events which had already taken place. But at this very time a secret, and to her unknown, aim added still more deadly certainty to the blow which threatened a life so dearly cherished. About this very time (May, 1794) Robespierre had declined in popularity, and was making great efforts to regain the ascendency. Collot d'Herbois, Tallien, Barras, Fouché, and others, by whom the consummation of the 9th Thermidor (27th July, 1794) was finally brought about, had already, though covertly, begun to encourage this reaction against the tyrant. The

adherents of the latter, on the other hand, began afresh their heretofore often successful attempts to raise the cry that the person of the republican chief, and, consequently, the republic itself, was in danger from the poniards of "the enemies of liberty." By such means they had excited, and hoped again to excite, an artificial interest in the public mind, and create a fitting pretence for taking off their personal as well as political opponents. The slightest shadow of a conspiracy among the captive aristocracy of the Luxembourg was an opportunity too favourable for maturing this infamous policy to be for a moment overlooked. Accordingly, following closely, and founded upon the simple event of the interview of a father with his children, just related, appeared a magniloquent paragraph in the *Moniteur*, to this effect:—"A grand conspiracy has been discovered in the house of seclusion" (the Revolution is celebrated for the invention of terms), "at the Luxembourg. To have discovered and denounced, is to have prostrated, and even annihilated the plot. The principal leader appears to have been the cidevant Vicomte de Beauharnais, member of the assembly called 'the Constituant,' (the first convention), and one of its presidents. This has been detected from certain papers seized, and from examinations of the suspected; from these it is understood, that nothing less than resistance and opposition to the revolutionary government had been meditated. This opposition, in the first instance of opinion only, apparently waited only a favourable conjuncture to become an armed resistance. Such were the principles, and such would have become the conduct, of the conspirators. They were aided in their culpable machinations by a young man attached to Beauharnais, and who seems to have been placed in the Revolutionary Committee of the section to act as the patron of the disaffected. Thanks to citizen Lafiotte, this conspiracy against liberty has been dis-

sipated; the eye of government will in a few days have completely unravelled its darkest intricacies and the hands of administration, armed for the consolidating of the republic, will not be slack to punish those who seem to live only to attempt its overthrow."

The "administration" suffered no time to elapse before fulfilling these denunciations of severity. The day following the publication of this exaggerated account of a very simple event Nevil was arrested, in a manner which, as Josephine remarked, "gave a scandalous publicity to his fictitious crime." But though its commencement was thus industriously bruited abroad, the scene of his captivity was so carefully concealed, that his nearest relatives, a mother and betrothed bride, continued in ignorance of his fate, or whether he was alive or dead, till Madame de Beauharnais, gratefully desirous of serving one who suffered on her husband's account, at length discovered the wretched committee man in one of the most loathsome of the revolutionary dungeons. These circumstances we learn from her own letters. But the hero of this feigned conspiracy, the vicomte himself, a celebrated republican commander, either appeared too great a personage thus to be struck obscurely and in the dark, or his accusers, by means of informations elicited from those with whom he conversed familiarly, wished to implicate both him and others more deeply in their snares. In carrying forward this latter intention, it must be acknowledged they evinced a diabolical ingenuity. And amid the terrible generalities by which history represents the enormities of the French Revolution, we are struck with a peculiar horror by the incident pertaining to our present subject, of a son and daughter—mere children too—*secretly* interrogated, in order indirectly to obtain matter of accusation against a father from their unguarded and artless answers! The feeling resembles that intenseness of pain occasioned by the contemplation of a single

group in Guido's Massacre of the Innocents. But here a mother's language will best describe the scene:

*Josephine, to her Aunt.*

"Will you believe it, my dear aunt? My children have just undergone a long and minute examination! That wretched old man, member of the committee, and whom I have repeatedly named to you, introduced himself into my house; and under pretence of feeling interested in my husband, and of entertaining me, set my poor ones a-talking. I confess that at first I was completely thrown off my guard by this stratagem; only I could not help wondering at the affability of such a personage. Innate guile, however, soon betrayed itself when the children replied in terms whence it was impossible to extort the least implication against their unfortunate parents. Thus I speedily detected the deceit. When he perceived I had penetrated his craft, he ceased to feign, and declaring that he had been charged with obtaining from my children information so much the more certain as being ingenuous, he proceeded to interrogate them in form. Upon this avowal, I was sensible of an inexpressible revulsion taking place within me; I felt that I grew pale with affright—that I now reddened with anger—now trembled with indignation. I was on the point of expressing to this hoary revolutionist the loathing with which he inspired me, when the thought arose that I might thus do injury to my husband, against whom this execrable man shows inveterate enmity; then I repressed my resentment in silence. Upon his desiring to be left alone with my little ones, I felt again the spirit of resistance rising within me; but such ferocity appeared in his looks that I was constrained to obey.

"Having locked up Hortense in a closet, he commenced by questioning her brother. When my

daughter's turn came, oh, now I trembled on perceiving the length to which her examination extended! for our inquisitor had not failed to remark in the dear girl an acuteness and penetration far beyond her years. After sounding them as to our conversations, our opinions, the visits and letters which we received, and especially on the actions which they might have witnessed, he broached the capital question, namely, the discourse held with their father in prison. My children, each in character, answered excellently well, and spite the subtlety of the wretch, who wished to find guilt, the sound understanding of my son and the intelligent address of his sister disconcerted, if they were not able to confound, the knavery. What consequences will they extort from an examination such as truth dictates to lips that are guileless? It can redound only to the triumph of innocence and the shame of its accusers: will they dare to produce it, if thence arise this twofold check?

"Still the same silence concerning the unfortunate Nevil. Notwithstanding my repugnance, I have decided on requesting an audience of a member of the committee of General Safety, Louis (deputy of the Lower Rhine), of whom report speaks less unfavourably than of his colleagues. Your nephew has expressly prohibited me from seeing these men, whom he regards as the assassins of our country; but he has not forbidden me to solicit from gratitude, and in favour of friendship. Had he done so, I could almost have dared to disobey the injunction. I hold the ungrateful in horror, and certainly never shall increase their number."

Thus we have already found, on other occasions, that amid her own afflictions the "amiable Josephine" forgot not the sorrows of others. The audience which, with charitable casuistry, she endeavours to exclude from her husband's general prohibition, was actually solicited and obtained a few

days after, as we learn from the following graphic epistle :—

*Madame de Beauharnais, to her Aunt.*

"Louis, the deputy of the Lower Rhine, whom I just saw for a moment, appeared to me not without some good, and I believe him not insensible. The accents of pity seem to find his heart not inaccessible. He does not repel misfortune, nor add bitterness to the reproaches wrung from grief; but those qualities precisely which recommend him to the oppressed become vices and lessen his influence with the oppressors. He enjoys little credit; and, after hearing my petition, could do nothing therein directly, but introduced me to his colleague, who is charged with the police of the prisons. The latter, with malice in his look, and mockery on his tongue, complimented me ironically upon the interest which I expressed in Nevil's fate. 'The cordwainer,' said the ruffian, 'is a vigorous and handsome youth: it is quite as it should be for him to be protected by a woman who is young and handsome also. If she now manifest sensibility, the time may come when he will be able to show his gratitude. As to the matter in hand, however, his examination being finished, his affair is no longer a concern of mine.—You must therefore transport yourself into the office of citizen Prosper Sigas, who, if so disposed, may grant you the required permission. You may say that I recommend him to be yielding, for it is really a sin to keep so long separated from each other two young people who only ask to be reunited.'

"After these impertinencies, to which I deigned no reply, the fellow gave me a card to the functionary whom he had just named. Oh! as for this latter, he proved quite another sort of person: to my delight and great astonishment, I found in M. Sigas all the urbanity desirable in a man of the world, joined to

that knowledge of detail which we have a right to expect in a public officer. He informed me, that notwithstanding a first examination, citizen Nevil still remained in the depôt of the committee of General Security. 'As it is supposed,' continued my informant, 'that he has disclosures to make, it has been judged fit to place him there, that he may be forthcoming when wanted. I am sorry for it, first on his own account, and next on yours, madam, whose interest he appears so fortunate as to have excited. There is your permission to communicate with him; you will observe that it authorizes these communications only in presence of a witness; but this postscript which I add gives the power to render the witness invisible if circumstances permit; or, if not, makes him blind and deaf.' Avow, my beloved aunt, that though now misplaced, it would not be easy to find a more amiable personage than M. Prosper Sigas.

"From the offices of the committee I descended to the Hotel de Brionne, under the gate of which the depôt is situated. You will have difficulty in believing, that neglect, or rather atrocity, could be carried so far as to establish this depôt in a subterranean passage, narrow, dark, receiving through grated loopholes a struggling and doubtful light, and which, in close contact with a public sewer, has, upon the roof, the channels of wells constantly in use. In this damp, gloomy, and infected hole are to be found, by tens and twelves, huddled into spaces of fifteen feet square, captives unknown to each other, and without other bed than a few boards raised some thirty inches from the floor, spreading mutual infection from their bodies, while they envenom the evils of their minds by dreadful confidences. Here groaned Nevil, when, to his great astonishment, he was called out, and recognised me with lively satisfaction. It is quite true that he has been examined, but less upon what concerns my husband than upon what passed

at the Luxembourg. As nothing, in fact, took place there, it thence resulted that questions were reiterated, while the replies were necessarily few and unsatisfactory. He is prepared for new trials."

Just as there occur pauses in the hurricane, there seems about this time to have ensued a brief cessation from the full severity of persecution in the domestic drama, the evolution of which, amid the grand national tragedy, it is our duty to trace. Beauharnais was permitted a little more liberty, and communication with his family was again allowed. This comparative calm might be attributed to some partial cause, and confined to the narrow circle of the present history, were it not found in a greater or less degree to have extended over the whole of the desolated expanse of republicanism. Under the prospect of his decreasing popularity, Robespierre essayed various methods of regaining his ascendency over the spirits, for his empire over the bodies of his countrymen remained undiminished almost to the last hour of his fatal existence. Among the plans by which he thus endeavoured to deceive was one foreign to his nature,—an appearance of leaning towards humanity. He encouraged the belief of discussions with his adherents on a change of system, and writings were even published under the eye, it was said, of the revolutionary tribunal, deprecating the severities which it was alleged circumstances had rendered necessary. All this appears to have been either a lure to induce individuals to commit themselves by encouraging an expression of opinion, or a mere tentative on the endurance of the nation; for the daily sacrifice of victims by the guillotine still continued, though with somewhat less parade of triumphant wickedness: the people, instead of applauding, had begun to look upon these orgies with sullen and ominous discontent. The device took for a space, and that it deceived Josephine among

others appears from the following letter to her husband, whose hours of captivity she imagined would be lightened by those hopes which affection whispered might be real, however stern experience might question the sweet illusion:—

"Dare I believe it true? Does Heaven relent, or can it be that the government, now more secure, sets a term to severity, and replaces terror by clemency? For two days precautions and rigour have been relaxed to such an extent as to permit external communications after a very slight scrutiny. The report gains belief that St. Just has had a very warm altercation with several members of the committee: the former is said to be desirous of changing the system; his policy, weary of punishment, is violently opposed to that of some of his colleagues. St. Just is a young man of that rare merit, found but once in twenty years; and thousands deplore the fatality which has dragged him forward in a career as dangerous as it is cruel. At the same time, nothing can be more astonishing than to behold Robespierre returning to sentiments of humanity. He who, after a long course of wandering, dared to proclaim a God in the very face of impiety, cannot bear a heart altogether abandoned.

"It is said, that in consequence of this quarrel, which does him so much honour, he has been expelled from all the committees, thus throwing upon his colleagues all the odium of a sanguinary administration. But the influence of this event has not been lost either upon those who hope or those who suffer. Here we thence experienced a joy which partook as much of surprise as of enthusiasm. By little and little these first transports calmed, and an unwonted security, more tranquil, but not less pleasing, succeeded. Do not you also, my friend, participate in these hopes? mine will be more lively and unalloved if you approve.

"The appearance of a pamphlet by Desmoulins is announced as an event; as perhaps you already know. It is said, that under the transparent allegory of the court of Tiberius, he paints the cruelties of our own time. This is being very bold; but it is added that he wrote to the dictation of Robespierre: in such case his temerity is not dangerous. Two copies were sent to our hotel, and one goes for my dear Alexander. May it be the cause of your passing a good night!"

The affections, says Shakspeare, are bad reasoners; and in the letter above we detect a singular instance of their sophistry. Probably, before perusing it, the reader could not have supposed a single virtuous action in the dark career of Robespierre. Yet, with an amiable anxiety to discover in the past some encouragement for the hopes which she wished to cherish for the future, has Josephine selected the only redeeming page in that dismal history. But, alas! how far from the witnessing of a good confession were the unhallowed orgies to which she alludes. Well might a celebrated living writer exclaim, that the preceding atheism was preferable to the religion of Robespierre. But in the men from whom she fondly looked for liberty to her husband and security to her children, Josephine determined to feign, if she could not find, something good, almost in the disposition with which the ploughman-bard addresses the great adversary:

O, wad ye tak a thought, an' men',
Ye aiblins might—I dinna ken—
Still hae a stake;
I'm wae to think upo' yon den,
E'en for your sake!

Between the statements of this letter, too, and the usual accounts of the Revolution, we discover a discrepancy as to date. In the latter, Desmoulins is said to have been condemned and to have suffered

with Danton. But the execution of that triumvir took place prior to Robespierre's impious acknowledgment; while Desmoulins appears, from Josephine's account, to have been, not only alive, but in favour, subsequently to the re-establishment of deism. It is most probable, therefore, that he perished, not as the associate of Danton, but at an after-period, —one of the daily victims to the jealousy of the tyrant, who decimated his adherents till he himself fell at last, isolated, and without support. The following is De Beauharnais's reply to his wife's communication, and shows how clearly he comprehended both the men and their devices:—

*Vicomte de Beauharnais, to Josephine.*

"My poor friend, what an error is thine! Hope deludes you; but in the times wherein we live hope disappoints and betrays. I have read with attention the work of Desmoulins: it is the production of an honest man, but a dupe. He wrote, you say, to the dictation of Robespierre: it is probable; but after having urged him thus far, the tyrant will sacrifice him. I know that determined man: he will not retreat before any difficulty; and, to secure the triumph of his detestable system, he will even, if need be, play the part of a man of feeling. Robespierre, in the conviction of his pride, believes himself called to regenerate France; and, as his views are short-sighted, and his heart cold, he conceives of radical regeneration only as a washing in blood. It is the easiest mode of reform, for the victims are penned, and the butcher has merely to extend his hand, and drag them to the slaughterhouse. Some, however, before expiring, had raised a cry of lamentation, and this note the credulous Camille is employed to repeat, in order to try conclusions with opinion.—Whatever may be his object, it will incur opposition, which will be wrested by the tyrant into a cause for

the sacrifice of new victims. Such is the grand outline of his policy.

"I grieve, my dear Josephine, to destroy your heart's illusion; but how can I entertain it, who have viewed too closely the manœuvres of tyranny? When we are unable to oppose to despotism a power capable of crushing despotism, there remains but one possibility of resistance, namely, to receive its inflictions with a virtue which may cover it with dishonour. Those who come after us will at least profit by our example, and the legacy of the proscribed will not be lost to humanity."

How truly her husband had divined the purposes of their persecutors was but too soon proved to Madame de Beauharnais. She was herself arrested soon after the alleged conspiracy. It is, indeed, to be wondered at, how she had been suffered to be at large after the vicomte's imprisonment, did not the circumstances already mentioned explain the cause, —a temporary mitigation of cruelty, only that it might burst forth with renewed fierceness.

*Josephine, to her Aunt.*

"I commence this letter at a venture, and without knowing if it will reach you. On Tuesday last, Nevil's mother entered my apartment with an air of anxiety, and even grief, on her countenance. My mind reverted to her son. 'I do not weep for him,' said the good woman, sobbing aloud as she spoke; 'though he be in secret confinement, I have no fears for his life; he belongs to a class whose members are pardoned, or rather overlooked; others are more exposed.'—'Others!' Instantly my thoughts were at the Luxembourg. 'Has Alexander been called before the tribunal?' exclaimed I.—'Be comforted; the vicomte is well.' I could then think of no one for whom to feel alarm. The kind-hearted creature

proceeded, with many precautions, to inform me that she alluded to myself. I immediately became tranquil. After having trembled for all that we love, my God! how delightful to have to fear only for one's self!

"Yesterday morning I received an anonymous letter, advertising me of danger. I could have fled; but whither retire without compromising my husband? Decided thus to await the storm, I sat down with my children, and in their innocent caresses could almost have forgotten my misfortunes, if their very presence had not more forcibly recalled the absence of their father. Sleep stole them from my arms, which at such a moment folded them, as if instinctively, in a more tender embrace. Alas! the love which unites a mother to her offspring has its superstitions also; and I know not what invincible presentiment overcame me with vague terror. Judge, if, thus left quite alone, I could banish this painful sentiment. Yet Heaven is witness, that the three cherished beings who constitute my whole happiness occasion likewise my sole pain. How think of myself when they are threatened!

"I continued plunged in these reflections, when a loud knocking was heard at the outer door of the house. I perceived that my hour was come, and, finding the requisite courage in the very consciousness that the blow was inevitable, I resigned myself to endurance. While the tumult continued increasing, I passed into my children's apartment; they slept! and their peaceful slumber, contrasted with their mother's trouble, made me weep. I impressed upon my daughter's forehead, alas! perhaps my last kiss; she felt the maternal tears, and, though still asleep, clasped her arms round my neck, whispering, in broken murmurs, 'Come to bed, fear nothing; they shall not take you away this night. I have prayed to God for you.'

"Meanwhile, a crowd had entered my sitting-room,

and there, at the head of ferocious and armed men, I found the same president already named, whom very weakness renders inhuman, and whose sloth favours his prepossessions against the accused. These prejudices, so far as concerned me, were deemed by him sufficient warranty for my arrest; without examination, as without probability, I saw that he firmly believed in what atrocious ignorance has termed the conspiracy of the Luxembourg. I spare you needless details; already have I been forced to impart too many sad ones. Let it suffice to know, that seals being placed upon every article with lock and key, I was conducted to the house of detention at the Carmelites. Oh, what shudderings came over me on crossing that threshold, still humid with blood! Ah! my beloved aunt, for what outrages are not those men prepared who did not punish the execrable crimes committed here!"

The prison to which Josephine had been thus conducted, and to whose horrid reminiscences she alludes in the concluding passage, was the convent of Carmelites, so well known in the massacres of the 2d, 3d, 4th, and 5th of September, 1793. During "these days of agony," as with fearful justice they are designated by St. Meard, nearly eight thousand individuals, collected in the various prisons of Paris, were deliberately slaughtered by a Jacobin mob. The executioners here, as the reader is well aware, volunteers in the work, received wages of the Convention at the rate of sixteen shillings a-day, without distinction of men and women, for they were composed of both sexes. The latter, however, were distinguished from the former by one little piece of refinement,—the females tucked up their sleeves for the work of butchery! The massacre of St. Bartholomew has now for nearly three centuries served to point each declaimer's epigrammatic flippancy on the evils of fanaticism; but why is

silence kept on these fiendish saturnalia of popular license? Do men dare to lay to religion's charge their own crimes, perpetrated under her sacred name, while they dissemble altogether, or blazon into magnanimous deeds, the outrages which they commit under the abused sanction of liberty? But if, as every good man confesses, that is not religion which is not tolerant, peaceful, and easy to be entreated, so that is not real freedom which is not subordination,—subordination to the laws, and to lawful superiors.

The place of durance allotted to the unhappy wife of De Beauharnais had, on these fatal days, been the chief scene of the sufferings of the clergy. Some hundreds of that order were poniarded in the chapel of the convent, or had their brains dashed out as they knelt before the altars. To this hour the walls and floor are stained with vast "gouts of blood;" and in the library is still preserved a copy of the New Testament found upon the corpse of one of these martyrs, pierced with twenty-two dagger thrusts, and purpled in every page with a hue too easily recognisable. No wonder, then, that Josephine, torn from her children, trembling for her husband, yet still bearing up under the pressure of her own personal fears, should at last feel a sickening of the heart on entering the desecrated precincts over whose entrance might well seem to have been placed the inscription which Dante has feigned for the infernal doors:

Lasciate ogni speranza voi chi entrate!*

In truth, among the numbers at that time in a condition nearly similar, it is difficult to imagine a family in more desolate circumstances than that of

* In Milton's imitation,—

——Hope never comes,
That comes to all.

De Beauharnais. When morning broke upon "the peaceful slumber," which a few hours before had been watched by a mother's fond regrets, Eugene and Hortense awoke alone in the wide solitude of a great city. Their parents in different prisons, one of which was inaccessible and the other unknown; their other relatives exiled or absent; they found themselves without friend or adviser. It is surprising how early circumstances so trying as these call forth the characters of the sufferers. In the present instance, however, it is less wonderful that in such an age they should have displayed exactly the same dispositions as marked their after-life, since Josephine's letters have already shown how very soon the minds of her children had given forth their respective bias. After the first burst of affliction on this fatal morning had somewhat subsided, our youthful sufferers began to consider what was to be done. Hortense, with the same energetic resolves as long after animated her on occasions of moment, when her prospects were far different, proposed instantly to set out for the Luxembourg, and demand to be admitted into their father's prison. Eugene, with a caution not unworthy of the boyhood of him who conducted the retreat from the Beresina, calmly objected to the impropriety of acting in a way which, without benefiting themselves, should opposition be offered, might compromise their parents, and proposed advertising their aunt at Versailles of their new misfortune. Nevil's mother accordingly undertook to have the necessary information transmitted, and before night Madame Fanny Beauharnais had her young relatives with her in the country. This kindness was never forgotten, when the parties could well repay the obligations of their youth; and to it Josephine adverted, in the affectionate appellation of *second mother*, under which she afterward usually spoke of her aunt. Thus were dispersed the members of a family so closely united by affection, and

for three of whom destinies so splendid were reserved. The fate which a few weeks later overtook the father would have been the only one predicted by a contemporary observer.

## CHAPTER III.

Outline of the Revolutionary Government—Josephine ignorant of its true Nature—Sources of her Confidence—Her Conduct in Prison—Letter describing her Situation and Fellow-Captives—Letter to her Husband—Massacre of the Priests—Affecting Incident—Letter in reply—Conclusion of the History of Tommy—The Noblesse—Letters to her Children—To Hortense—To Eugene—A last Interview—Execution of M. de Beauharnais—His Letter to Josephine—Her Distress—Letter of the Dutchess D'Aiguillon—Josephine prepares for Death—Tale of Robespierre—Singular Correspondence—Prediction—Queen of France.

THAT the reader may be enabled fully to appreciate the danger which now threatened the principal personages of the narrative, as also to understand its incidents, a brief retrospect to the revolutionary administrations and tribunals will prove useful.

At the period of Josephine's arrest, the machinery of the "infernal system,"—the "rule of terror," as the government of this time has been but too justly designated,—consisted of four distinct movements. Of these, the Committee of Public Safety, that of Public Security, and the Tribunal of the Revolution were public and recognised authorities; the fourth, the Club of Paris, with its affiliated societies of Jacobins throughout the provinces, existed rather of itself than as authorized by the state; or, more correctly, it was at once the source which supplied and the strength which supported the others. The first, or head of the whole, the Committee of Public Safety, exercised a most despotic and secret control over all other authorities, dictating all measures to the Convention—now but a name—or more fre-

quently acting without consulting even the forms of republicanism. This court, whose deliberations were private, and proceedings supreme, was constituted of ten or twelve members indifferently, according to the equality of influence possessed by several of the leading Jacobins in the Convention. Re-elections rendered the memberships permanent in that sect; though successive proscriptions and periodical retirement made individual changes frequent. The Committee of Public Safety acted in some measure as the dictator of revolutionary France, being only so much the more formidable to its subjects, that it consisted of many, instead of one tyrant. The Committee of Public Security may be considered in the light of an assistant or a subordinate authority to the preceding, acting in the capacity of a police tribunal, having also its members selected in the same manner from the most determined revolutionists, and subject to similar changes. These two assemblies were properly legislative; the executive was vested in the Revolutionary Tribunal, the vilest, probably, and the bloodiest instrument which is recorded in the annals of oppression. When we speak of executive, the expression is to be understood as applicable only to criminal matters, as these related to state offences, or to attempts which could by any means be construed as counteracting the progress of revolutionary principles. The court consisted at first of six judges, whose situations were permanent, and their functions remunerated by a fixed salary. To these were added two assistants and twelve paid jurymen, officials also of the state; consequently, as respected the protection of the accused, the appointment of these jurors was mere mockery For the more quick despatch of their bloody work, these twenty executives were subsequently separated into four sections, each armed with the same tremendous powers as the parent assembly. It has been well

observed, that in the most ferocious and unconstitutional authorities of either ancient or modern times, we find consistency and forbearance, as compared with the indiscriminate slaughter inflicted by the doom of the Revolutionary Tribunal. The Jacobin Club of Paris, the fourth in this agency of crime, may be considered as composed of so many voluntary informers, who hunted out and denounced the victims, whom the three former fraternities judged and punished. Every city and town, nay, every village in France had also its club, corresponding by means of its secretary with that of Paris, taking upon itself the administration and the powers of government, in examining, accusing, and imprisoning citizens whom its members had cause, interest, or malice in suspecting. These clubs, or local committees, were generally composed of the lowest and most ignorant of the people; while, from these very defects, they obtained the more influence over their deluded countrymen, who thence conceived that the lower orders must necessarily attain due influence in a state whose main supporters were chosen from the rabble. By this formidable conspiracy against whatever was elevated or dignified, learned, elegant, or noble, the slightest whisper of suspicion could, with appalling celerity, be conveyed to the capital from the remotest frontier, while through the same channel the fiat of Robespierre was directed against its victim with a surety and speed which defied concealment or escape.

But the efficiency of even this terrible ministry would have been imperfect without the "Law against suspected Persons," framed, as an appropriate rule of procedure for such courts, by Merlin de Douay—a law which could be met on the part of the accused by no legal defence, no availing challenge, since it was indefinite in all save its fatal tendency. Though pointed expressly against those who might, however distantly, be connected with the aristocracy, the law

of suspicion was quickly discovered to be a most prevailing weapon, wielded for whatever purpose.—Chameleon-like, it assumed hues as circumstances might require, and ever against the accused. Did a man desire to live prudently retired from the troubled scene of public affairs?—he was accused of being suspected of disaffection to liberal, that is, revolutionary, principles. Was an individual zealously active in what was termed the good cause?—that, provided he had wealth, furnished no protection; his zeal might be without knowledge; and he might be accused of being suspected of entertaining notions not exactly in accordance with those of the republic. In short, there existed no security against suspicion, for the penalty could be inflicted wheresoever it was thought convenient to fix the mark. At the period of which we now speak, to be denounced was sufficient,—the revolutionary committees inquired no further: even the slight forms by which at first suspicion had undergone something like inquiry were dispensed with altogether. The lists of names and descriptions which all householders were obliged to publish outside, of the inmates within doors, were barely perused, and designations pitched upon at hazard. Imprisonment, deprivation of rights, confiscation of property, and civil death were the immediate consequences of denouncement. Execution by the guillotine generally followed; and with so little ceremony was capital punishment dealt out among the three hundred thousand captives who crowded the revolutionary prisons, in which the heads of the Beauharnais family were now immured, that each morning, regularly as the sun arose upon a land, from every peopled spot of whose surface his blessed beams were polluted by exhalations of blood, crowds were hurried to death, by twenties and thirties on the same sledge! Doubtless these had actually been tried and convicted of being, at least, liable to suspicion?—will be the natural ques-

tion of the reader. No! they were taken at random; and provided the daily hecatomb was furnished, few cared to inquire of what individual victims it might be composed. Such was, is, and ever will be government by any populace; and such were the dangers to which the subject of these Memoirs lay now exposed.

It was Josephine's misfortune, in the first instance, to have but imperfectly appreciated the real state of things, regarding as scarcely serious the individual circumstances already narrated. Convinced of her husband's innocence of practising against the government, even such as it then existed, and in happy ignorance of the supreme demoralization of its principles and administrators, she could not believe the latter in earnest, until their devices closed but too fatally around. Like a child who turns, half-terrified, from the mask which it knows to have been assumed, she shrunk from the sad realities of imprisonment and criminal prosecution, though unable to reconcile them with her own conviction of the illusions upon which they were attempted to be based. "What a pity," she thus writes to her aunt, "that I can no longer indulge my disposition to laugh at passing events; for, apart from their atrocious aspect, they exhibit, on the whole, something extremely ludicrous. This miserable affair of the conspiracy of the Luxembourg, for instance, which never existed, save in the brain, and very likely in the profitable speculations, of those by whom the whole was got up, assumes a consistency for the consequences of which I have just reason to tremble."

We have seen the troubles and anxieties which overwhelmed Madame de Beauharnais on her husband's account, and might perhaps naturally conclude, that, in captivity herself, these would be painfully augmented. But this would not be a just inference; on the contrary, she even appears to have recovered a portion of her former tranquillity. Hers, however,

was not that casting away of care which arises from a reckless indifference of knowing the worst, too common in such condition, and painfully characteristic of this particular era; but a happy confidence springing from the calmness of an unclouded spirit—the serenity of a mind that has never neglected duties when opportunities served; and which seeks, under all circumstances, occasion of being useful to others. Delightful privilege of a conscience at peace with itself, and in charity with all mankind!

Conscienza l'assicura,
La buona compagnia che l' uom francheggia
Sotto l' usbergo del sentirsi pura!

Her heart, devoted to benevolence, appeared to cherish only one regret under the loss of liberty, namely, that the four walls of a prison-house circumscribed the power of doing good. In her own words, "I now find myself good for nothing, since I cannot move about among those who were more comfortless still than myself." But in this Josephine was unjust; forgetting, that by kindness of manner, and the gentle charms of an unvarying cheerfulness of disposition, she poured consolation and hope into many a forlorn and anxious bosom shut up within the same narrow precincts with herself. "An enemy to all wrangling," we quote from an amiable and well-informed biographer, "detesting political disquisitions, she lived in good understanding with all circles of her fellow-prisoners, divided as they were in opinion, and disputing among themselves with a bitterness which was ever sure to be allayed where Madame de Beauharnais could obtain a hearing. Benevolent towards her inferiors, friendly and always the same with her equals, polite to those who conceived themselves her superiors, she conciliated universal affection. In prison, as afterward upon the first throne in the world, she was beloved by all classes, because ever found to occupy the station which best became her. The sense of propriety, indeed, seemed in her

an innate knowledge: thus, she neither experienced insolence in the season of her adversity; nor, when empress, made others feel how infinitely her own condition was above theirs."

It is pleasing to know that goodness here brought its reward. The following letter displays Josephine's situation, with a playful attempt at philosophizing on character, which would amuse under any circumstances, but, as written from a prison, is delightful. Who Madame Parker was we have vainly endeavoured to discover; nor is any thing known beyond the fact of her having been French, and married to an Englishman. In all probability, the lady died early, since nothing shows that the correspondence was subsequently continued.

*Josephine, to Madame Parker, in London.*

"Let me place before you, my dear friend, two contrasts, which we but seldom remark, though they present themselves every day; and of which I have a fancy to talk with you for a moment. Good news, last evening, of my children—to-day, hopes in my husband's affairs: what more favourable to appetite, to sleep, and to good-humour? Thus, mine is not so very sour; and that it may become altogether agreeable, I set about writing to you.

You are young, rich, handsome, witty, adored by an amiable husband, and courted by a circle where your talents are applauded and enjoyed: why, then, are you not happy? I possess little fortune, still less beauty, no pretensions, few hopes: how then am I able to taste some felicity? Grave philosophers might perhaps enter into lengthy discussion, in order to resolve the question. The problem would become still more complicated were I to add,—the one lives in the land of independence and of liberty —yet she weeps: the other vegetates in a region of servitude—and, though in prison, is yet tranquil.—

To explain this diversity, by difference of characters is rather to postpone the explanation than to remove the difficulty; for whence arises the difference of characters?

"My dear Clara obeys the impulse of her heart when she recounts to me sorrows which she exaggerates: I, on my part, yield to the dictates of mine while entertaining her with what another would call pains, but which two days of slight hope, springing up once more in my breast, has transformed into pleasures

"Know you, my beloved friend, what it is that, in a place such as this, creates unceasingly those pleasures which are almost always soothing, sometimes even positive happiness?—two trifling combinations which concurred fortuitously, namely, a parody of life in the great world, and the simplicity of private retirement. This demands explanation

"In the commencement of things that be, this establishment, being occupied by great lords, had beheld transferred within its bolts and bars the whole majesty of the salons of the ancient court, and consequently all its dulness and languor. An augmentation of inhabitants introduced increase of visits, private assemblies, etiquette, and all the ceremonial invented to conceal the disgust experienced by greatness. At the sight of this petty pomp,—this dignity in miniature,—the new comers conceived the idea of oversetting the whole by exposing it to ridicule. To succeed here nothing was wanted beyond exaggeration. Henceforth a gravity of deportment attached to the most indifferent actions; they accosted each other with all the formalities of the herald's office, and bade good morning as if declaiming from the rostrum; the tone ascending gradually to the diapason, so to speak, of lofty breeding, they contrived to give to everything that is most common in domestic life the importance of romance and the emphasis of tragedy. All this assuming pretension would long before have been ridiculous, even at Ver-

sailles, or in the Fauxbourg St. Germain; judge, then, what must have been its extravagant effect in the narrow circuit and amid the miserable appliances of a prison.

"Some good spirits there were who readily perceived that, to banish the mortal dulness which had not failed to follow in the train of these absurdities, it was only required to call in the aid of reason—but reason, gentle and conciliating, accompanied by intelligence, and guided by good taste, whence might arise modesty, with simplicity of manners and intercourse. Buckram and lace, however, uniting their forces against the new revolution, maintained the combat for some time with advantage, and yielded not till after a stiff defence. Their general defeat was just about taking place when I became an inmate. The greatest freedom has since succeeded to the slavery of etiquette. Now we trouble our heads very little with observances, but are very solicitous about kind actions. We feel, that in order to find people amiable it is necessary to take some pains to be so one's self. Each makes some concessions of individual tastes to those of our companions in misfortune; we enter into each other's views, or oppose them with gentleness, instead of contending with fury. Some honoured names and lofty titles continue to receive the respect established by usage; but the homage of the mind is given to social qualities, to the talents which profit our society, and to the virtues which serve us for models. It needs not to inquire if those to whom there remained nothing save pretensions treat as revolutionists the innovators for whom merit has acquired rights.

"Such is now the state of minds here. Among the hundred and sixty captives composing our establishment, five or six private societies have been formed through resemblance of individual opinions and character. Some others there are, still more closely associated by the most tender affections, and

these, isolated and silent, mix little with the pleasures of the rest, which they never disturb. As for me, independently of a number of acquaintances and friends whom I have recovered, I see everybody and every where meet with hearts to console and misfortunes in which to sympathize. This reminds me that you, my dear Clara, believe yourself to be among the unfortunate, and under that title have a right to what I lavish upon others. To-day, however, you shall have no consolation beyond the certainty of an approaching melioration in my destiny. Is not that sufficient to render yours happy, at least for some moments? Need I assure you of my participation in your afflictions, imaginary though they be? and know you not, that while you suffer I suffer also? The greatest of all misfortunes is to doubt that which we love to think true, and such sorrow at least we shall never experience, so far as depends upon each other. Adieu, my friend. *Courage!* Must that word be pronounced by her who languishes in a prison? Ought she not rather to preserve for herself the exhortations which she sends to you? My children are well,—De Beauharnais's affair assumes a more favourable turn,—why, then, should my fortitude fail? Once more, adieu."

Happy had it been for France if the grand revolution without, had been conducted on the same principles of kindness and forbearance as directed the reformation within, the prison of the Carmelites. The delightful descriptions in Josephine's letter transport us indeed to a scene which fills the mind with a pleasing astonishment, when we think that those who were thus intent on the active charities of life were themselves every moment exposed to the dread of a public execution, and from the windows of their prisonhouse, might daily behold their countrymen, perhaps relations, dragged ignominiously to the block. But whatever might be the fears

of her companions, Josephine's apprehensions and hopes were wholly independent of self,—wholly fixed upon those she loved: her present cares were for the misery around her,—her distant thoughts were on her children and her husband. The favourable turn in the vicomte's affairs arose from one of those vicissitudes, or rather experiments, frequent in the latter days of Robespierre's sway, and allowed correspondence between the prisoner in the Luxembourg and the captive of the Carmelites. The letters were, indeed, subjected to inspection, but, by means of Nevil's mother, and sometimes through himself—for he had now recovered his freedom—communications passed which were seen only by the parties. Madame de Beauharnais anxiously embraced every opportunity of transmitting to her husband whatever could tend either to inform him of the situation of affairs, or beguile the lingering hours of captivity. Among the epistles dedicated to the latter purpose appears the following tragical account of the massacre which had taken place in the very prison which she herself then inhabited.

*Josephine, to her Husband.*

"You have not forgotten the unfortunate village maiden in the environs of Rouen, who, being abandoned by her lover, became insane, and wandered about the highways, inquiring of every traveller concerning her ungrateful seducer. The good Marsollier caused us to shed many tears when he related some years ago the misfortunes of the poor forsaken maniac; and our amiable Dalayrac has rendered them familiar to the public ear by verses which will not soon be forgotten. Well, my friend, there is in this house a youth who, with even greater propriety than Nina, might become the hero of a drama. He is an English boy, named Tommy. The fatal con-

sequences of an unfortunate passion have often been to be deplored, which, by depriving the hapless sufferer of reason, takes away all feeling of sorrow; but the sentiment of gratitude is rarely so profound as to produce the same effect. The wretched Tommy is a touching example of the excess of an affection of which much is said, but little felt. This history struck me as so interesting that I resolved to send you the relation. Your heart will appreciate the simple recital; and, by occupying you for a few minutes with the sorrows of others, I shall beguile you from your own. To lament over our species, to give tears to their griefs, is, alas! the sole distinction vouchsafed in a season of trial.

"A respectable priest of St. Sulpice had conceived an affection for Tommy, and bestowed upon him the principles of a Christian education: I say Christian, in the full extent of the word; for the worthy Abbé Capdeville, equally tolerant as pious, made the youth his pupil only, nor once thought of rendering him his proselyte; persuaded that religion in a pure mind will insinuate itself gently by example, and can never be prescribed as maxims. Those which he inculcated upon Tommy were drawn from a universal charity, of which he exhibited meanwhile an affecting example in his own practice. A witness of numerous benefactions, distributed with not less kindness than discernment, Tommy could not doubt that the first foundation of religion is to be laid in charity. He was in like manner convinced that indulgence and toleration must have been ordained by God, whom he beheld so well manifested in the benevolent abbé. This priest reserved for himself nothing beyond the simplest necessaries: lavish towards others, he refused to himself whatever could not be regarded as indispensable at an age so advanced as his. The calmness and placidity of his countenance testified that his heart had ever been tranquil. Never did a shade appear on his visage, save when he found it

impossible to be of service to a brother, or to sooth the remorse of a guilty conscience.

"Tommy, gifted with quick penetration and lively sensibility, conceived for his benefactor an attachment so much the more ardent that he had previously never known any one to love! He had been deprived of a mother's tenderness before he could feel his loss; and he was not more than eight years old when Providence threw him in the way of this protecting angel. An orphan, forsaken by all the world, he had been received, brought up, and educated by M. Capdeville. To obey the latter appeared to him so delightful, that he succeeded in all things: it sufficed that his *father*—for so the boy named the good priest—directed him to do any thing, in which case an indefatigable perseverance enabled him to surmount every difficulty. This amiable and excellent youth displayed a remarkable aptitude for music. His voice, harmonious, though not brilliant, accorded with several different instruments; and his daily progress on the harp pe mitted the anticipation that, by-and-by, he would be able to impart to others what he himself so well knew. M. Capdeville, being a man of great learning, received as pupils the children of several distinguished professors, who in turn took pleasure in teaching the protegé of their friend. Thus, without expending what he conceived to be the property of the poor, the worthy man found means of procuring the best masters for his dear Tommy; and, so modest himself in every thing personal, he yet enjoyed with pride the success of this child of his adoption. Alas! the happiness which he thus experienced was destined to be of short duration!

"The consequences of the fatal 10th of August crowded the prisons with almost every priest who had not taken the constitutional oaths. The Abbé Capdeville, persuaded that churchmen ought to obey the powers that be, according to the precepts of the

gospel, had given the required pledges, and submitting, if not in heart, at least to authority, had consequently no reason to fear any measure against himself. But how abandon the venerable Archbishop of Arles, his diocesan and constant patron? In consequence of this devotedness, the revolutionists of the section, who had seen, and wished to see, only an accomplice in a grateful friend, pronounced his imprisonment in the Carmelites. Here, some days afterward, by various means, and after much difficulty, Tommy contrived to join his benefactor; for, at a time when a word, a look even, sufficed to plunge the individual into a dungeon, the poor youth was denied the privilege, which he solicited with ardour, of serving in his turn the old man who had watched over his childhood. The heartless men who refused for some time his request termed their denial a favour, while it was but cruelty. One of the members, who had formerly been under obligations to M. Capdeville, at length obtained an order, and Tommy, to his inexpressible joy, was shut up with his benefactor.

"I wish to spare you, my friend, the description which has since been given me of the horrible massacre which took place on the 2d of September in this prison,—a spot for ever memorable by reason of the sublime resignation of the numerous victims there sacrificed. The chapel was particularly selected by the murderers as the scene of death for the clergy. They seemed to have been dragged thither in order that their last look might rest upon Him who, persecuted like His servants, had taught them to forgive; and the last sighs of these unfortunate men respired in feeble hymns of praise. They were actually praying for their assassins when the frantic mob burst into the sacred place! The Archbishop of Arles, seated in a chair on account of his great age, was giving his last benediction to his kneeling companions,—Capdeville, on his knees also, was reciting

the prayers for those in peril,—the responses within were given as from a choir of martyrs, and without in the savage vociferations of a furious crowd eager to shed blood!

"Tommy, dreadfully agitated, traversed the whole building, in every sense of the word, stopping in order to listen, weeping at intervals, and uttering mournful cries. Some neighbours, whom a courageous pity had imboldened to enter, wished to save him, and favoured his escape; but, returning to his master, or rather friend, he took a station by his side, and refused to be separated from him. The ruffians having forced open the doors, and broken the windows, penetrated by several points at once: the pavement of the chapel, and the steps of the sanctuary, were speedily inundated with blood. Capdeville, struck immediately after the bishop, fell at his feet, and, extending a mangled hand to Tommy, expired as he looked upon him. That look was a last blessing.

"Already the poor youth, or rather child—for he is not yet sixteen—exhibited unequivocal symptoms of alienation of mind; on the death of his friend a fixed insanity appeared. The unfortunate abbé, who had knelt apart from the companions of his martyrdom, having been engaged in officiating, had fallen with his head supported on the upper step of the altar, and his body extended across the others; the left hand was pressed against the heart, and the right, as I have already said, extended towards his pupil. The blow which had finally deprived him of life had been so rapid in its operation, that death had not effaced the habitual expression of benevolence which lightened his placid countenance. He seemed to smile and slumber: by some sudden change in the reasoning faculties, Tommy became convinced that his friend slept. Instantly, as if by enchantment, the scene of slaughter disappeared from before his vision; he knelt

down by the side of the bleeding corpse, waiting its awaking. After three hours of watching, and as the sun sank beneath the horizon, Tommy went to seek his harp, and again sat down beside the remains of his friend, playing melancholy airs, in order to hasten his awaking, which appeared to him to be long in taking place. While thus employed, sleep stole over his own frame, and the charitable hands which removed from the despoilers the bodies of the martyrs, carried away Tommy, and laid him on his bed. There he remained eight-and-forty hours in a kind of lethargy, whence, however, he awoke, with all the appearances of soundness of body and mind. But, if health had been restored, reason had fled for ever.

"In commiseration of his pious madness, a free asylum has been granted to him in this house, where he passes the day in silence till each afternoon at three o'clock. The moment that hour strikes, Tommy, who ordinarily walks slowly, runs to seek his harp, upon which, leaning against the ruins of the altar still remaining in the chapel, he plays his friend's favourite airs. The expression of his countenance on these occasions announces hope; he seems to expect a word of approbation from him whose remembrance he cherishes; this hope and this employment continue until six o'clock, when he leaves off abruptly, saying, '*Not yet!*—but to-morrow he will speak to his child.' He then kneels down, prays fervently, rises with a sigh, and retires softly upon tiptoe, that he may not disturb the imaginary repose of his benefactor. The same affecting scene takes place day after day; and during the intervals, the poor boy's faculties seem completely absorbed, till the fatal hour calls forth the same hopes, destined for ever to be chilled by the same disappointment.

"Though a prisoner within the same building, I had not had an opportunity of seeing the unfortunate

youth. I have just for the first time looked upon that countenance whereon are depicted so many griefs and virtues. I found it impossible to entertain you with anything else to-day. Adieu, then, *my friend, until to-morrow;* but, more happy than Tommy, I am certain of being able to repeat to the object of my solicitude all the tenderness with which he inspires me."

The reader will doubtless be solicitous to know the sequel of the incident so feelingly described above. This desire cannot be more pleasingly gratified than by introducing here the two letters which follow:

*Vicomte de Beauharnais, to Josephine.*

"Your history, my beloved friend, is extremely touching, and little Tommy very interesting. After having read your letter more than once privately, I communicated it to our circle, and each, like myself, praised, as he deserves, the poor victim of the noblest of all sentiments,—that is to say, all have shed tears over his misfortunes. All France would do the same were the circumstances disclosed. Ah, how he merits to be known! What a contrast to the crimes of the age! But the epochs of the greatest iniquities are likewise the eras of the loftiest virtue, and, for the sake of example, that of Tommy ought not to remain in obscurity. We have talents here which will find delight in holding up his to general admiration. One of us is prepared to paint the portrait of your Tommy; another will dedicate his literary exertions to the same pious purpose; and this little monument, offered without pretension to a public not naturally insensible, may, perhaps, lay the foundation of the orphan's fortune.

"For my own part, I shall be happy to contribute to this effect, by attaching the forsaken youth to the

fortunes of our son. Eugene bears in his heart the germ of every virtue; and how would these seeds of goodness be ripened into activity by the example of one who had carried even to excess the affections of attachment and gratitude! Do not lose sight of this idea; it will, my good Josephine, accord with your own benevolent inclinations; and, should it ever be realized, we shall have gained, from the most painful occurrences of our life, the rarest of all monuments—the most affecting of all recollections.

"My oppression diminishes daily; there remains only a severe cold, which has fixed upon my chest, through the perpetual irritation inseparable from my situation. At the sight of the doctor, all this disappears; and when I read your letters, my dear Josephine, I cannot persuade myself but that I am happy! When we shall once more be reunited, my happiness will no longer be an illusion, and you will be of the same mind, for you will feel it to be real."

*Josephine, in reply.*

"For once, my dear friend, you must give me credit as a soothsayer! The third and fourth volumes of the 'Old Cordelier' have begun to persuade you; but what say you to the work itself? I hasten to send it you. Here, we fight who shall have it first, and divide the volume into fragments, in order to read it by morsels; tears accompany the reading, and mutual embraces follow on the close; one-half of our captives have given orders for fêtes, country parties, and new furniture. To-day Madame de S. sent for a famous jockey, with whom she has concluded a treaty for replenishing her stud; and the old Du Merbion, with whom you may recollect having hunted at Rainey, has ordered from Scotland six couples of terriers, such as were never seen in France. In short, projectors of all descriptions

are retained by the month; and when we do get out I know not if we shall find a morsel of food! Nevil's mother participates in our hopes and our joys; and you, my dear Alexander, you must not destroy them with a cruel foresight,—an ill-founded distrust, and all the sinister presentiments inspired by too much experience, by the remembrance of a home, and the aspect of a prison. Till we meet, my beloved, adieu; I do not to-day embrace you upon cold paper: for I hold myself in reserve soon to lavish upon you endearments like my affection,—real.

P.S. I have written to our aunt, imparting the happy news. I wrote also to our children, and have informed Eugene of a companion worthy of him. Tommy consents to live with us, but stipulates one express condition,—namely, that, upon the second day of every month, at three o'clock in the afternoon, he shall be permitted to come here, and, by the harmony of his notes, charm the dreams of his sleeping friend during the whole continuance of the Revolution! Poor Tommy! who would not be moved by a delirium so affecting?"

What an amiable contrast is presented in these letters between the Beauharnais family and their fellow-captives. With the execution of their prince fresh in memory—their own imprisonment, a positive evil—the ruin of their names and lineage in prospect—the noblesse of France could yet be concerned about horses and dogs, grooms, cooks, and upholsterers! Truly, the picture is at once ludicrous and mournful. What would the country have gained in moral dignity, even could her virtuous citizens have then shaken off the coarse and cruel despotism which oppressed them, to reinstate such imbecility in its worthless folly? The unimpassioned and, as it were, accidental view of its members which these letters present but too strongly confirms the truth of the picture afterward drawn

of the emigration, or nobility of the old regime—"that adversity had taught them no wisdom," while we know, from our own experience, "that prosperity could not inspire them with moderation." But let us turn for a moment to Josephine and her excellent husband, contriving, amid their own misfortunes, how they might alleviate the woes of others, and amid the anticipations of future happiness, placing, as one of the principal ingredients of enjoyment, the reflection of having elicited good from their severest trial! Alas, that intentions such as these should have been frustrated by one like Robespierre! Even in this view, however, we trace the hand of Providence. Beauharnais, tried as he had been, and reclaimed, was at least not exposed to the temptation of again falling away, and Josephine's means of doing good were infinitely extended. Poor Tommy! it appears not what became of one so helpless and so innocent. Most probably he perished when his fellow-sufferers, suddenly released by the death of the tyrant, and without the power of maturing any plan, had left him to his own resources.

In every thought of their parents for the future, as well as in all their anxieties for the present, Eugene and Hortense occupied a great share. They continued to reside at Fontainbleau till their mother's release; and two notes from Josephine, of this period, are still preserved.

*Josephine, to her Children at Fontainbleau.*

"Your two letters, though of the same date, reached me at an interval of three days from each other. They are very nice notes, my dear children, for they truly express how much you love me, and so well composed, that, if your aunt had not assured me of having given you no assistance, I should have thought I recognised in them the hand of the *Fairy*.

But, if she have not written your billets, she has at least informed me of your excellent conduct; in yours, I discover new proof of her goodness and amiable disposition. Your father will be no less delighted than I am. You do well to give us cause of consolation while wicked men persecute us. They shall pass away and be punished; you, my good children, will enjoy the recompense in your own affectionate hearts, by witnessing our happiness. Place yourselves one on each side of the benevolent *Fairy*, and kiss her for your father and me. Continue to be good, that we may all love you better and better."

The following is in a very different strain; and, while proving that Josephine knew how to correct as well as to commend, it exhibits an early instance of the energetic, but somewhat hasty character of her daughter.

*Josephine, to Hortense.*

"I should be entirely satisfied with the good heart of my Hortense, were I not displeased with her bad head. How, my daughter, is it, without permission from your aunt, that you have come to Paris? What do I say? It is contrary to her desire! This is very bad. But it was to see me, you will say. You ought to be quite aware that no one sees me without an order, to obtain which requires both means and precautions, such as poor Victorine is little able to take. And, besides, you got upon M. Darcet's cart, at the risk of incommoding him, and retarding the conveyance of his merchandise. In all this you have been very inconsiderate. My child, observe, it is not sufficient to do good; you must also do that good properly. At your age, the first of all virtues is confidence and docility towards your relations. I am therefore obliged to tell you,

that I prefer your brother's tranquil attachment to your misplaced warmth. This, however, does not prevent me from embracing you, but less tenderly than I shall do when I have learned that you are again at Fontainbleau."

Poor child! she had left her aunt's house early one morning, and, without leave obtained, had travelled upwards of thirty miles on a market-cart, and, arriving in Paris, had found her way to the Hotel Beauharnais, where Victorine still occupied the apartment in which every thing had been sealed up by the revolutionary functionaries. Next day she returned to Fontainbleau without having seen her mother, whose letter, so pleasing both for its tenderness and decision, and her own tears, formed the sole meditations of Hortense; for she read and wept alternately, till received and forgiven by her aunt.

The hopes which Josephine now entertained of her husband's release, and their consequent happiness, were founded partly on the general aspect of political affairs, and partly on private assurance, that friendly intervention would be attempted in aid of him on whom her whole affections centred. For this once Beauharnais himself seems to have thought, that hope might not be entirely illusion. After the death of Danton, and the acknowledgment of a Deity, though executions daily took place, yet the ferocity of Robespierre seemed mitigated. He found that the people, it can hardly be said were inclined to lenity, but that they looked upon bloodshed and suffering with less of positive satisfaction than heretofore. Though not less cruel, he deemed more caution requisite; he even felt public opinion, by means of writings. One of these, the *Old Cordelier*, which spoke of ancient usages and their restoration, was at this time more than usually bold in its con-

cluding volumes; and we perceive the effects which its delusive pages produced upon the captives of the Revolution. But the tyrant's remaining associates clearly perceived that their only chance of safety lay in being able to anticipate the blow which, sooner or later, his jealous fears would level against themselves. Hence the hush of all angry feeling—they wrought deeply and in secret; but it was only the silence which precedes the bursting of the thunder. All this spread a degree of calm over the political horizon; there was evidently a change at hand. Men augur as they wish, and it seemed only natural to the captives of the Luxembourg and the Carmelites that this change should issue in their restoration to rank and liberty. In Josephine's case, these general expectations acquired more especial consistency from the fact of Dorcet Cubieres, an ancient friend, having recently come into power, who zealously laboured to effect a hearing, in full committee, of the reasons of Beauharnais's committal to prison. In this he was warmly supported by Prosper Sigas, now minister of war, upon whom Josephine had made a most honourable impression, under the circumstances already mentioned, when she visited Nevil. So far gratitude had wrought its own reward. From such an investigation was anticipated the acquittal of General Beauharnais, an expectation founded on the certainty which these friends entertained of his innocence, and because most of the members of government, who would have been his judges, had once served as his colleagues, or seconds in command, during his military career. Sigas had been further charged with drawing up a report of the case for the Committee of General Safety; and, upon learning this, Josephine addressed to the minister the following letter,—a document which proves the writer to have possessed no less prudence than zeal:—

*Josephine, to Citizen Prosper Sigas.*

"CITIZEN,—I am informed that you have been employed to prepare a report, to be presented to the Committee of General Safety, on the affair of General Beauharnais. For this I give thanks to Heaven; and had I been permitted to choose my judge, that choice would have fallen upon you. I had heard you mentioned, and always has your name been accompanied by those honourable but considerate epithets which flattery can never invent, which can be inspired by gratitude alone, and are never deceitful. Subsequently chance, or rather Providence, become less severe towards us, placed me in momentary correspondence with you. That brief space sufficed to convince me, that the gratitude of those whom you have obliged is only consistent with truth. I also am become one of those whose misfortunes you have endeavoured to mitigate. I have to unite my gratitude to that of the many unfortunate beings whom you have laboured to render forgetful of their calamities. Nor are you ignorant that mine increase in bitterness each day that passes away while my husband remains in prison untried. For it is no longer his liberty which he solicits,—he demands his trial. A brave soldier has a right to this where he is accused of a crime which compromises his honour.

"Alexander de Beauharnais a conspirator! One of the founders of liberty meditating its downfall. He who, among a hundred others, was distinguished as a promoter of the republic, essaying to overturn freedom! Citizen, you have never believed the accusation, and those who have brought it forward believe it no more than you. But the importance lies in that his judges should no longer give credit to the imputation. Let them listen to you, and they will be persuaded. Do not tell them, however, that

his wife, equally innocent as himself, languishes far from him, under other bolts than those by which he is retained. I speak of myself only to enable you to appreciate the injustice done to Alexander. Forget the mother persecuted, and her children dispersed, in order to think solely of the father and the husband, or rather of the soldier and the citizen, worthy of recovering honour and liberty."

The examination solicited in this letter so far took place, that Beauharnais was removed from the Luxembourg to attend at the office of the Committee of General Safety. The only consolation, however, thence resulting was the last interview between Josephine and her husband, under the following circumstances: Sigas having obtained the appointment of a day of conference for the vicomte, Cubieres contrived that the same should be named for hearing Josephine also. This arrangement—benevolently effected with the design of at least bringing the parties together, or, if any thing should be accomplished in their favour, of rendering their joy mutual—was carefully concealed from those chiefly interested. Disappointment in either case would have inflicted positive misery; but where there had existed no anticipation, no hope could be destroyed. Accordingly, Josephine, having been conducted from the prison of the Carmelites, was waiting in an anteroom her turn to be summoned before the committee. She was alone; her heart filled with those alternate vicissitudes of confidence and fear, which at an agitating crisis succeed each other we know not how or wherefore, when, to her inexpressible astonishment, the door opened, and Beauharnais entered. He on his part felt no less surprised. Neither spoke; both stood for a moment as if entranced, then rushed into each other's arms. They knew not what their meeting portended: scarcely dared they to indulge hope for the future;

but the present was theirs, and in the happiness of being reunited, they enjoyed, in Josephine's own words, "moments of felicity which softened, nay, caused to be forgotten, a whole year of misery." This tender interview was interrupted by the entrance of the minister of war, Prosper Sigas. He came to announce that, in consequence of his elevation to office, other changes in the revolutionary cabinet had ensued, and that Louis, the friendly deputy for the Lower Rhine, was superseded in the situation of reporter to the committee. Upon this it was agreed, that it would be imprudent to press an examination with a new reporter, indifferent to the issue, and ignorant of the case. "I also," continues Josephine, writing of these events, "resolved to profit by this information, and promised to solicit no audience till a more favourable moment. This occasion had, indeed, been far from unpropitious, since it had brought us together. But in what a place! and at what a crisis! I know not what my poor Alexander thought of me; for my part, I found him very pale, very thin, and sadly changed. As to his disposition, that is ever the same; he is the most amiable and the noblest of men. Resignation, courage, heroic sentiments, and conduct still more magnanimous,—such are the principles of his character. He had wept with joy on once more beholding me; when it had become necessary that we should separate, he was calm and collected. He embraced me more like a friend than a husband, and recommended our children to my care. Such tranquillity becomes innocence like his. Now I grieve that these people of the committee did not see him. Could they have resisted the ascendency of his virtues!"

Amiable, but sad mistake—the ascendency of virtue over a revolutionary committee! That goodness in others may retain its empire over the mind, something, at least, of man's original nobility must

rence towards God and becoming gravity before men. When the night of the 6th and 7th had now been far spent, and all preparation accomplished left his mind collected in its tenderness, he sat down to devote his parting thoughts to Josephine. The following letter was delivered by Nevil, to whom it had been intrusted by her husband, together with the lock of hair purchased for that purpose from the executioner, who, according to custom, had cut it off, that the stroke of the axe might not be impeded. The precious deposite did not reach its destination till some time after the fatal catastrophe, when Josephine could say, in transmitting to her aunt a copy whence the following translation is made, "Yes, I will live to cherish his memory—to educate my children, to love you much, my dear aunt—and my friends a little. During the last few hours a sweet change has taken place in all my feelings. Would you know whence I derive this consolation, read the enclosed."

*Last letter of Vicomte de Beauharnais to his Wife.*

"Night of the 6–7th Thermidor,
Year 2, Conciergery (24–25th July, 1794).

"Yet some moments to tenderness, to tears, and to regret,—then wholly to the glory of my fate, to the grand thoughts of immortality. When you receive this letter, my Josephine, your husband will have long ceased to live here, but, in the bosom of his God, he will have begun to enjoy a real existence. Thou seest, then, that there is indeed no cause for mourning on his account: it is over the wicked, the insensate men who survive him, that tears are to be shed; for they inflict, and are incapable of repairing the evil. But let us not sully with their guilty image these last moments. I would, on the contrary, adorn them by the thought, that having been united to a charming woman, I might have beheld

the years passed with her glide away without the slightest cloud, had not wrongs, of which I became sensible only when too late, troubled our union. This reflection wrings tears from me. Thy generous soul pardoned the moment that suffering overtook me; and I ought to recompense thee for such kindness by enjoying, without recalling it to thy remembrance, since I must thus bring back the recollection of my errors and thy sorrows. What thanks do I owe to Providence, who will bless thee!

"Now Heaven disposes of me before my time, and even this is one of its mercies. Can the good man live without grief when he sees the world a prey to the wicked? I should think myself happy, therefore, in being removed from their power, did I not feel that I abandon to them beings so valued and beloved. If, however, the thoughts of the dying be presentiments, I experience one in the recesses of my heart which assures me that these horrible butcheries are soon to be suspended,—that to the victims are to succeed their executioners,—that the arts and sciences, the true prosperity of states, shall flourish again in France,—that wise and equitable laws will reign after these cruel sacrifices,—and that you will obtain that happiness of which you were always worthy, and which to the present time has fled from you. Our children will contribute to your felicity,—they will discharge their father's debt.

"I resume these incoherent and almost illegible lines, which my jailers had interrupted.

"I have just undergone a cruel formality, which, under any other circumstances, they should have forced me to endure only by depriving me of life. But why strive against necessity? reason requires that we do all for the best. My hair has been cut off. I have contrived to purchase back a portion of it, in order to bequeath to my wife, and to my children, undeniable evidence, pledges of my last recollections. I feel that at this thought my heart

is breaking, and tears bedew the paper. Farewell, all that I love! Love each other; speak of me; and never forget that the glory of dying the victim of tyrants, the martyr of freedom, ennobles a scaffold."

From the ardent affection of Josephine for her husband, and from the natural sensibility of her excellent heart, it might have been presumed that her sorrow on learning his melancholy fate would be equally deep and sincere; and the following letter describes with much feeling the distressful situation of the poor sufferer. Though in the original the signature had been accidentally removed, or intentionally omitted, there is no difficulty in recognising the delicacy of a female pen. The writer is believed, on the best grounds, to have been the young Dutchess d'Aiguillon, then a fellow-prisoner with Josephine, and who subsequently became Madame Louis Girardine,—a lady for whom the empress entertained the greatest affection of all those who afterward adorned the imperial court.

*To Madame Fanny Beauharnais.*

"MADAM,—Like every one in France who can read, I have the honour to know you, but not of being known by you. When it would be my desire to commence our correspondence by applause, why must I begin with tears? Alas! at this moment your own are flowing, for the last day's journals are before you, and will have made you acquainted with the fate of M. de Beauharnais. The situation of his unfortunate wife must necessarily redouble your sorrow, through anxiety on her account. Take comfort, madam; the health of that amiable person, sorely shaken as it has been by the frightful shock, is yet less threatened than the tranquillity of her mind. and the sensibilities of her heart. She con-

tinued two days in ignorance of the fearful catastrophe. By a note from the vicomte, your nephew, she had been informed of his translation to the Conciergery, and his approaching appearance before the tribunal; but hope had taken possession of every faculty, and there remained no longer room for fear; that which would have proved cause of apprehension to another served to augment her confidence. She remained for a length of time under this illusion, in which, indeed, numbers had participated, but which recent events began to dissipate. It was painful in the extreme to listen, as she entertained us with the story of her affection and her hopes, when he for whose sake these were cherished would, in every likelihood, no longer profit by earthly good. But when all was at an end, we could not even smile, though faintly, upon such sweet enthusiasm; we were silent, and, turning from her with a sigh, the unbidden tear started involuntarily. We carefully concealed the fatal journals of the 8th; she asked for them repeatedly, without attaching any thing beyond ordinary to their importance, and only insisted after remarking our many pretexts, delays, and refusals. These led to the suspicion of the cruel truth, which our silence and tears served but to confirm.

"This first blow brought on a long faint, from which she recovered only to abandon herself to a more legitimate and violent despair. So many hopes frustrated! So much felicity vanished away! We sought not to console her, persuaded that grief would find a close in its own excess. Accordingly, the sorrow of Madame de Beauharnais, unquestionably more profound, though less overwhelming, preyed, so to speak, upon itself, and, by degrees, changed into melancholy: sad benefit of time, which lessens our griefs only to render them the more enduring!

"We spoke to her often and much of her children,

and thus brought back attachment to life, by proving to her how necessary she was to those beings whom she most loved. It is but right, madam, I should likewise say, that we represent to her how delighted you will be to experience her care when she shall be released from prison. To endeavour, by any means, to divert Madame de Beauharnais from her present sorrow would be vain, but we may hope to be able to diminish its bitterness,—not by words, but by a detail of those duties which remain to be fulfilled by a heart like hers. Be assured, madam, that we omit nothing;—is it possible to enjoy the happiness of knowing your niece, and remain indifferent to her sufferings?

"I have the honour to be," &c.

It may be considered as almost a fortunate circumstance, that her own urgent danger either roused Josephine from a state of apathy into which she might have been plunged by a misfortune so unexpected, or encouraged her to endurance from the glad prospect of the suffering being brief. On the same day which, as above described, brought the discovery of her husband's fate, she herself received intimation to hold herself in readiness for death, as she was to be removed to the Conciergery on the 10th, and thence to the guillotine. The merited but horrible end of Robespierre during the preceding night saved Madame de Beauharnais, with about seventy others, destined for the usual morning sacrifice to the "deities of Reason and Revolution." Had we not her own confession, it might be deemed altogether incredible that under such circumstances, Josephine's thoughts should involuntarily revert to, and dwell upon, the singular prediction which has already been reported in the commencement of these Memoirs. "In spite of myself," said the empress, long after, to her ladies, "I incessantly revolved in my mind this prophecy. Accustomed thus to exer-

cise imagination, everything that had been told me began to appear less absurd, and finally terminated in my almost certain belief. One morning, the jailer entered the chamber, which served as bedroom for the Dutchess d'Aiguillon, myself, and two other ladies, telling me, that he came to take away my flock-bed, in order to give it to another captive. 'How give it?' eagerly interrupted Madame d'Aguillon; 'is, then, Madame de Beauharnais to have a better?'—'No, no; she will not need one,' replied the wretch, with an atrocious laugh; 'she is to be taken to a new lodging, and from thence to the guillotine.' At these words, my companions in misfortune set up a loud lamentation. I consoled them in the best manner I could. At length, wearied by their continued bewailings, I told them that there was not even common sense in their grief; that not only should I not die, but that I should become *Queen of France*. 'Why, then, do you not appoint your household?' asked Madame d'Aiguillon, with something like resentment. 'Ah! that is true—I had forgotten. Well, my dear, you shall be maid of honour; I promise you the situation.' Upon this, the tears of these ladies flowed more abundantly; for they thought, on seeing my coolness at such a crisis, that misfortune had affected my reason. I do assure you," continued the empress, addressing her auditory, "that I did not affect a courage which I felt not; for I was, even then, persuaded that my oracle was about to be realized."

A few evenings before this, Josephine had witnessed the weak and almost romantic means by which the tyrant's overthrow had been at least hastened, and the consummation of her own prophecy accomplished. One of the ladies detained, as above described, in the same chamber was Madame de Fontenay, formerly Mademoiselle Cabarus, and who, subsequently divorced from her first husband, became so celebrated under the name of the second.

Prior to her incarceration, Tallien had declared his passion; but, unable to save Madame de Fontenay from revolutionary law, came daily to the prison, that he might at least enjoy the satisfaction of seeing her through the grated window. Even for a considerable space previous to the date at which we are now arrived, Tallien was the life and soul of the conspiracy secretly organized by the Mountain party, against the despotism of Robespierre. Circumspection, however, was no less necessary than resolution; for, though the conspirators perceived their own or the dictator's destruction to be the inevitable alternative, distrusting the means of opposition, or watching the fading popularity of their victim, they preferred, for a little, to follow the progress of events to hazarding doubtful conclusions. In this state of things, Tallien, as usual, appeared one evening at the guarded casement of the Carmelites. Meanwhile, Madame de Fontenay had secretly learned that she was speedily to be called before the Convention. This she knew to be but a prelude to the block: aware also of Tallien's designs, she resolved to urge their execution, and thus to secure at least a chance of escape. The two ladies Fontenay and Beauharnais appeared in the evening leaning on each other, as if to breathe the fresh air through their prison bars. The former made a sign, to all others imperceptible, soliciting Tallien's attention. It may easily be imagined with what anxiety both watched his motions, as they beheld him lift from the ground a piece of cabbage-stalk, flung from the window by Madame de Fontenay, and in which she had concealed the following note:—

"My trial is decreed—the result is certain. If you love me, as you say, urge every means to save France and me."

Similar methods of communication were by no

means unfrequent in these times of trouble; disparted friends contrived to maintain a correspondence, frequently by the most ingenious arts, and some of the letters already quoted were originally transmitted to their destination concealed in fruits and flowers. Tallien, having secured his billet, conveyed in a less poetical disguise, resolved on immediate action. From agitating in the committees, he proceeded to the Convention, where, as upon an arena, Robespierre had prepared to meet his opponents. Tallien had pledged himself to mount the breach in the first assault; and bravely did he redeem his word, when—forcing St. Just from the tribune, as the latter pronounced the words, "I lift the veil"—he exclaimed, in a voice of terrific emphasis, "I rend it asunder!" and continued, in a speech replete with the wild but powerful eloquence of the period, turning the execrations and the daggers of the whole assembly against him at whose least nod its chiefest members had trembled. The lesson is useful, but humiliating,—to reflect that popular misrule had made the fate of the noblest kingdom of continental Europe to depend on a piece of herb thrown by the feeble hand of a woman!

But, to return to the consequences as they affected Josephine, and as related by herself. "Madame d'Aiguillon, feeling herself ill from the thoughts of my approaching execution, so abruptly communicated, I drew her towards the window, which I opened, in order to admit air. I then perceived a woman of the lower class, who was making many gestures to us, which we could not understand. Every moment she caught and held up her gown, without our finding it possible to comprehend her meaning. Observing her to persevere, I cried out, '*Robe* (a gown), on which she made a sign of affirmation. Then, taking up a stone, she put it in her apron, and again held up her gown to us, raising the stone in the other hand; '*Pierre*' (stone), I called

out to her in return. Her joy was extreme on perceiving, to a certainty, that we at length understood her. Putting the stone into her gown, she several times, and with great eagerness, made the sign of cutting a throat, and fell a-dancing and shouting. This singular pantomime excited in our minds an emotion which it is impossible to describe, since we dared not to think that the woman thus intimated to us the death of Robespierre. At the very moment, while thus between hope and fear, we heard a great noise in the corridor, and the formidable voice of the turnkey, who was speaking to his dog, and, in the act of kicking him away, cried out, 'Go, you d——d brute of a Robespierre!' This energetic phraseology proved we had no longer anything to fear, and that France was saved. In fact, a few minutes after, we beheld our companions in misfortune burst into our apartment, to give us the details of that grand event! It was the 9th Thermidor! My flock-bed was restored to me, and upon this couch I passed the most delightful night of my life. I fell asleep, after saying to my companions, 'You see I am not guillotined—*and I shall yet be Queen of France!*'"

## CHAPTER IV.

State of France—Liberation of Josephine—Her Distress—Anecdotes—Letter—Madame Tallien—Anecdotes—Letter—Eugene—Anniversary of his Father's Death—Commencement of Josephine's Correspondence with General Bonaparte—Anecdotes—Their first Interview—Letter—Josephine's Opinion of her future Husband—Hesitation—Marriage—First Campaign of Italy—Letters of Bonaparte to his Wife—Josephine at Milan—Anecdotes—Espionage—Traits of Bonaparte's Character—His Affection for Josephine's Children—Congress of Rastadt—Campaign of the East—Parting.

THOUGH the tyrant had fallen, France was not liberated. A fierce democracy ruled, and filled, for a twelvemonth longer, that unhappy country with the violence of a cruel reaction. The national vengeance, though often just in the selection of its individual victims from among the instruments and abetters of Robespierre's enormities, proved on that account no less fatal to the general tranquillity of the state. The ferment and agitation in men's minds were thus prevented from subsiding; the public feeling continued hardened to the spectacle of human blood; and such had been the complication of events, that recrimination might have been extended to nearly the whole members of the Convention—those most active in accomplishing its release from the thrall of the dictator being far from excepted. These circumstances placed in direct opposition or in mutual distrust the democracy and a democratical government,—the most jarring, the bitterest, and the most unmitigated of all hostility.—Thence, in the first instance, numerous executions, enforced by the popular resentment; and, in the second, the national rulers, in self-defence, taking part with the greatest criminals against the nation. The Convention divided within itself: the Jacobin

clubs restored; the excesses of the *collets noirs*—a band formed of those who had lost their parents or relations in the preceding massacres; all present misrule, confusion, and violence, which render the space that elapsed from the death of Robespierre, in July, 1794, to the establishment of the Directory, in October, 1795, one of the most imbecile, if not calamitous, eras of the Revolution.

During this period the distress of Josephine was most severe. She had been released from prison on the famous 9th of Thermidor, but in what manner does not exactly appear. Nor is obscurity respecting individual occurrences here much to be wondered at, when we reflect on the confusion incident upon any great political change, especially such a one as followed the death of Robespierre. While that change permitted a cessation of the atrocities which marked the Reign of Terror, it allowed at first only a partial release of prisoners, and it required interest to be included among the few emancipated captives. At this time, the Vicomtess Beauharnais could claim little effective protection, save in the friendships she had conciliated among her companions in misfortune. To the influence of Tallien, therefore, through his future wife, Madame de Fontenay, the liberation of Josephine is to be ascribed. The gratitude which she ever afterward expressed proves the value of Madame de Tallien's services upon this occasion, though of the direct mode or instrumentality of her deliverance she never spoke, probably because there was nothing to communicate beyond the fact of having been set at liberty along with the inmates already mentioned as occupying the same apartment of the prison.

During the night which, as the eve of her appearance before the dread tribunal, she had regarded as among the last of her life, Josephine had been employed, as her latest act, in writing an affecting letter to her orphans:—"My children, your father is already

no more, and your mother is soon to die. But since my executioners leave me still a few moments, I would wish to devote them to communion with you. Socrates, after his condemnation, passed the hours in philosophical discourse with his disciples; a mother, about to be placed in a similar situation, may surely converse with her children. My last sigh will be one of tenderness, and I hope my last words may prove a lesson. Time was when I could impart to you sweeter instructions, but the present will not be the less useful, that they have been given in the season of calamity. At present, I have the weakness to blot these admonitions with my tears; soon shall I be called upon, and will courageously seal them with my blood!" The unhappy parent then proceeds with certain details of her early life, to which we have already been indebted. From these she inculcates the wholesome precept, that "upon the government of ourselves, upon patience, mildness, and forbearance towards others, our happiness and success in life must mainly depend." What an admirable lesson this from a mother who had so well exemplified its efficacy in her own gentleness; but how melancholy the perusal to those poor orphans whose friendless way it was intended to guide! We may judge, then, of the joy caused at Fontainbleau, by a letter from that beloved mother and relative, not only alive, but at liberty.

In the prospect of death, Josephine's last thoughts had thus been of her children; in the enjoyment of health and freedom, her first resolve was to have them with her, though, as remarked by herself, scarcely knowing how to provide the next portion of food. From the prisons of the Revolution she had indeed made a near escape with life, but her resources had been entirely ingulfed by its confiscations, so that, upon being released, there remained little between her and absolute want. Goodness, however, generally proves its own reward. Jose-

phine had supported the distressed when circumstances gave the power, and now experienced, in her own day of evil, that years of crime had not extinguished benevolence in France. The empress long afterward seemed to take pleasure in conversing with those who possessed her confidence concerning this crisis of her distress,—a theme apparently deriving all its charm from affording an opportunity of recording with gratitude the names of those by whose kindness she had been relieved. Of the attentions then experienced, she expressed herself as having been most sensibly affected by those of Madame Dumoulin, a very worthy person, who applied to the best use a large fortune, by entertaining daily at table a select circle of friends, whose means were less abundant. At this lady's hospitable board the widow of De Beauharnais enjoyed a regular cover. Throughout a considerable portion of the year 1795, so frightful a famine desolated France, that bread was subjected to a legal restriction both in quality and quantity, two ounces only, of a mixed flour, being allowed to each person throughout the sections of Paris. During this severe scarcity, guests invited to the tables of even the most opulent entertainers brought each their own allowance of bread. From this necessity Josephine was exempted by her kind hostess, being unable even thus far to provide without inconvenience for the wants of the passing day. This gave her occasion, when long afterward relating these circumstances, to observe, with amiable gayety, "To Madame Dumoulin I was actually indebted for my *daily bread*." Another member of the same friendly circle, a Madame de Montmorin, took also a most friendly interest in one whose situation could not be viewed without pity, nor her character known without being loved, and procured for the mother and children those indispensable articles of clothing of which they were almost completely destitute. This obligation was

afterward requited with a liberality and kindness becoming the splendour of their means, and bespeaking the deep gratitude of the parties.

Nor amid this actual suffering did Josephine escape the apprehensions of even greater calamities. The fierce levelling of democracy was still aimed at the few of noble birth remaining in France. As a security to her son against the effects of the crime of nobility, he is said to have been bound an apprentice to a carpenter, whose workshop was then in the *Rue de l'Échelle*. This circumstance, indeed, though in itself extremely probable, is not stated on any exact avowal of the parties themselves, but is mentioned on the authority of one who had long daily access to their presence. The fact is, moreover, certain, that, till lately, there lived in the street specified an old woman, who distinctly recollected to have seen Eugene passing along, frequently bending under the weight of a plank, too severe a load for his boyish strength, unpractised as it was in such labours. We are here tempted to anticipate dates, in order to introduce a letter illustrative in some measure of the preceding statements, and a striking evidence of that delightful simplicity and moderation which we have represented as constituents of Josephine's character. The reader will bear in mind that the original was addressed by the empress to her son,—viceroy and successor of Napoleon in Italy, one of the hereditary princes of Europe, and son-in-law to the King of Wirtemberg.

"My son,—in beholding the aggrandizement of your fortunes, it requires not that I admonish you to raise your mind along with them. Whatever height your grandeur may attain, the sentiments which I know you to cherish are more elevated still. Such is the superiority of the man who, in all things, is guided by conscience. In this you prove yourself the worthy son of him with whose features you recall to me also his principles and conduct. In the depth of

misfortune, he displayed such magnanimity only because in prosperity he had shown unimpeachable probity. The remembrance of unblemished honour is sufficient for our support in the last hours of life, inasmuch as its whole duration is thus ennobled. You, my son, are now exposed to the prestiges of greatness, but where these do not seduce they cannot corrupt. Surrounded by honours and opulence, you will remember Fontainbleau, where you were poor, an orphan, and friendless; nor will you retrace those scenes, save to reach forth a helping hand to the unfortunate. I learn with joy that your youthful spouse participates in all your sentiments; it is a proof that she shares your whole affections; and as I am herein equally interested with yourself, my rejoicing is that of a mother. In the same maternal relation, I embrace you both."

However attained, those who, amid their greatness, could act and feel thus, were not unworthy of crowns and principalities. In all probability, too, had the same gentle influence continued to temper the fiery energies of its founder, this grandeur might have proved more enduring.

In these her early distresses and struggles, the widow of De Beauharnais found her most valuable friend in Madame de Fontenay, now the wife of one of the rulers of France. As Madame de Tallien, the latter then enjoyed no inconsiderable credit, which, it is but justice to say, she appears to have employed in relieving the oppressed—often in saving the innocent from death. That Josephine afterward proved unable, in the court of the Tuileries, to return the protection which had been extended in the revolutionary halls of the Luxembourg, though a source of sincere regret to herself, hardly interrupted the friendship of these distinguished women. The empress saw her ancient friend in secret; and their stolen interviews at Malmaison, though they could not be un-

known where the completest espionage was reduced to a system, were at least not prohibited. The public attentions, which it was forbidden to repay to the mother, were transferred to the children: Mademoiselle Thermidor Josephine Tallien, the present Countess de Pelet, whose accomplishments amply testify the imperial cares, was educated by the empress. Madame de Tallien's kindness, while in power, did not always meet with a similar return; more than one family among the present nobility of France, whose members owed fortune and life itself to her interference, forgot afterward to be grateful. One, now a marchioness, she concealed for three weeks in her dressing closet, absolutely stealing provisions from her own table for the support of her secret guest, fearful that she might be betrayed, should her retreat be confided to a third party. The marchioness escaped, and more than usually fortunate under the empire, the family, on the return of the emigrants, regained their rank and estates.—Madame de Tallien, then living privately in Paris, naturally expressed surprise at not seeing her former *lodger*. This being reported by some officious friend, "O la!" exclaimed the marchioness, with well-enacted horror at the idea of ingratitude; "to be sure I have often designed to call, but then one must study appearances, you know. Pray ask when I could see Madame Tallien alone." Away posted our go-between with this message, presuming, like your impertinently good sort of people, that charitable intentions exempted of course from all the observances of feeling, &c. "Tell the marchioness," replied Madame de Tallien, with the greatest composure, "that I am never alone, being constantly surrounded by friends to whom I had once the happiness of being useful."

In the latter years of her eventful life, when misfortune seemed to have opened her heart afresh to the remembrances of early friendship, Josephine

delighted in frequently relating such anecdotes of Madame de Tallien, of whom she ever spoke with great affection, and occasionally showed to her ladies a large collection of autographs, where those of the lady of the ex-director were carefully preserved, along with letters from nearly all the sovereigns and most of the distinguished personages of Europe.—These portfolios are still in existence,* and their publication would furnish materials of value to contemporary history. Meanwhile, we give the following from Josephine to Madame de Tallien, which, written towards the close of 1795, shows that the former, in a most discouraging situation, had preserved unbroken her natural buoyancy of spirit:—

"My dear Friend,—There is talk of a magnificent soirée at Thelusson. I do not ask if you are to be there. The fête would languish without you. I write merely to beg you will wear the peach-blossom dress you like so much, and which I now no longer detest. I purpose sporting a similar one, and as I hold it important that our costumes be exactly matched, you are hereby instructed that I shall wear my hair done up in a red handkerchief, tied *à la Creole*, with three loops on the temples. What is very daring in me is quite natural for you, who are younger—perhaps not prettier, but incomparably more blooming. You see I render justice to everybody. But it is a *coup de parte*; the object being to reduce to despair the *Three Lapdogs*, and the *English Brace*.† You comprehend the momentous nature of this conspiracy, the necessity of secrecy, and the prodigious effect of the result. To-morrow I depend upon you."

At this period the beauty of De Tallien and the grace of De Beauharnais drew the admiration of

* In the possession of the Countess de Brady.
† Noms-de-guerre—nicknames—for certain reigning ones.

Parisian society. In France, more than in any other country, female influence has operated directly, not only upon national manners, but upon political affairs. From this latter interference, indeed, most pernicious consequences have resulted; but, in the present instance, were it not that scenes of gayety contrast fearfully in such proximity with deeds of blood, we could almost term the idea a happy one which led to the re-establishment of woman's humanizing empire over the courtesies and bearing of social life. Of those in power, Tallien and Barras, and others of less note, though deeply stained with the previous crimes of the Revolution, were not destitute of refinement, and as things began to assume a somewhat less sanguinary aspect, they felt desirous of emerging from its savage coarseness to the amenities of polished society. In the circles formed with such intent, Josephine, introduced by her friend, and so eminently fitted to become their "grace and ornament," could not be overlooked. She quickly obtained an ascendency over the minds of some who directed public affairs, and over Barras in particular, through whose means a portion, though a small one, of her husband's attainted property was restored.—This good fortune, however, did not come all at once; the greater part of 1795 passed under the straitened circumstances already described.

We thus attain the close of the first year following the death of Vicomte de Beauharnais.* The following recital of this date possesses a twofold interest, as exhibiting Josephine where she ever appears to great advantage—in the domestic circle, and as descriptive of her little menage. She had now been able to establish herself and children, with two faithful domestics, in a small but not inelegant residence in the street then named Chantereine (No. 6), which

* That is, reckoning according to the revolutionary calendar, which terminated the year with the autumnal equinox

from the first splendid success of him with whom her destinies were soon to be linked, afterward obtained the designation it still bears,—the Street of Victory.

*Josephine, to Madame Fanny de Beauharnais.*

"My dear Aunt,—I must relate to you a charming trait of our Eugene. Yesterday, being the 7th Thermidor, the anniversary of a day ever to be deplored, I sent for him, and, showing the engraved portrait of his father, said, 'There, my son, is what will prove equivalent to six months of diligent study and of wise conduct. This portrait is for you; carry it to your chamber, and let it often form the object of your contemplations. Above all, let him whose image it presents be your constant model: he was the most amiable and affectionate of men; he would have been the best of fathers.' Eugene spoke not a word: his look was cast down, his countenance suffused, and his grief evident in his agitation. On receiving the portrait, he covered it with kisses and tears. Mine also flowed apace, and thus, silently locked in each other's embrace, we offered to the shade of Alexander an acceptable homage.

"The same evening, all my friends having retired except Cubiere and St. ——, I beheld my son enter, followed by six of his young friends, each decorated with a copy of Alexander's portrait, suspended from the neck by a black and white riband. 'You see,' said Eugene, 'the founders of a new order of knighthood; behold our tutelary saint,' pointing to the portrait of his father, 'and these are the first members,' introducing his youthful friends. 'Ours is named the order of *Filial Love*, and if you would witness the first inauguration, pass with these gentlemen into the small drawing-room.' Judge, my dear aunt, of my emotion! We followed Eugene. Our little saloon, fitted up with a taste in which I recognised the hand of Victorine, was ornamented with a

long garland of ivy, roses, and laurels. Inscriptions, extracted from the printed discourses or remarkable sayings of M. de Beauharnais, filled the intervals, and beneath them were girandoles with lighted tapers. This heroic and simple decoration served as an offset to a species of altar, upon which, surrounded with festoons of flowers, and with flambeaux, stood the whole-length portrait of my unfortunate husband.—Three crowns, one of white and red roses, a second of laurel, and the third of cypress, were suspended from the picture-frame; and in front stood two vases with perfumes. Six others of my son's companions, ranged about the altar, maintained a respectful silence. On seeing us, the greater part, being armed with swords, eagerly unsheathed their weapons, and, clasping the hand of my son, took the oath, 'to love their parents—to succour each other—and to defend their country.' At this sacred word, my son, unfurling and waving a small pennon, shaded among its folds the head of his father. We embraced each other, mingling tears with smiles, and the most amiable disorder succeeded to the ceremonial of inauguration.

"Ah! my beloved aunt, could any thing comfort me for my irreparable loss, would not my children prove my consolation, who, while they make me feel it more acutely, sweeten the pain by so many good and endearing qualities! How much did I regret that my Hortense was absent!—but she is with you. She will read my letter; she will weep with joy in there recognising her own affections, and will double her delight while she runs to mingle tears with those of her brother, who, I am well assured, will ever bear in mind his father's constancy and courage, and will strive to render himself worthy of the name he bears, by perpetuating the brilliant actions which render the warrior illustrious, and which honour the peaceful citizen. The heart of my Eugene includes all that is good and great.

"You, my aunt, will aid me in the performance of the duty which has devolved upon me; can I, then, doubt the result of my children's education? I should be ungrateful to complain for what has been taken away, while I think of you and of them!"

We now approach the most important crisis in Josephine's fate,—the commencement of her connexion with that extraordinary man, whose fortunes placed her on the most powerful of the thrones of modern times. In the month of May of the eventful year 1795, Napoleon Bonaparte came to Paris, a successful general of artillery, at the age of twenty-six; but at this time without employment, almost without hopes. The preceding incidents of his life; his studies at Brienne and Paris; his residence for several years in country quarters at Valence in Dauphiny, as second lieutenant; the dawning of his reputation at Toulon; his first campaign among the Maritime Alps, with the army of the south; his mission to Genoa; his consequent unjust arrest and dismissal by the representatives Albitte and Salicetti, are well known to the readers of the admirable Memoirs of Bourrienne. The summer of this year he had passed in idleness, narrow circumstances, and various wild and fruitless schemes. His energies, however, and talents had been remarked by some of the leading men of the Convention, especially by Barras, who witnessed the display of these qualities at Toulon. In the circles and at the table of Barras Bonaparte and Josephine first met. A disappointed and, in some measure, disgraced officer, however, was not very likely to attract the regards of one already looked upon as among the distinguished ladies of France. At a subsequent period, even while the advances were all on the side of General Bonaparte, Madame de Beauharnais hesitated long before bestowing her hand, and appears to have been finally determined rather by the representations of friends,

and the desire of giving a protector to her children, than by inclination. Even the personal appearance of Bonaparte was at this time greatly against him, from the effects of disease. At the siege of Toulon, an artilleryman having been killed at a gun in one of the batteries, whence it was most important to keep up the fire, the young officer seized the ramrod, yet warm, from the hands of a cannoneer, as he lay partly on the embrasure and partly on the carriage This man had been labouring under an inveterate itch, and, partly from using the same ramrod, partly from having been bespattered with the blood and brains of the diseased gunner, Bonaparte himself caught the infection. By unskilful treatment, this loathsome complaint had been thrown back into the system, and, at this particular period, had reduced him to a perfect skeleton, with a countenance black rather than pale, and meager in the extreme. From the inward effects of the disease he had not indeed completely recovered on the return from Egypt, nor till he had been some time attended by the celebrated Corvisart.

At length, in the autumn of 1795, events occurred which raised Bonaparte decidedly from the crowd. The Convention had long been unpopular. On the 22d of August, the famous constitution of the year 3 appointing an executive of five directors, a legislative assembly of Five Hundred, and a deliberative body, or Council of Ancients, had been adopted.—The constitution was to reconcile the people; but to provide for themselves, the members of the Convention added, as a condition, that two-thirds of the new legislature should be elected from their body. This restriction, opposed generally to the wishes of the nation, appeared most objectionable to the inhabitants of Paris, who resolved to overturn the Convention by force of arms. September passed in menacing preparations. On the 4th of October, hostilities actually commenced, by Menou, com-

mander of the forces of the Convention, marching into the quarter of Paris named Pelletier, in order to disarm the National Guards, who had sided with the people. Menou found the guard in readiness to oppose him, and retired without effecting any thing. The members of the Convention perceived that their defence must be intrusted to a sterner spirit, and Bonaparte, on the recommendation of Barras, was appointed under the latter second in command of the Army of the Interior. The Tuileries were to be attacked next morning, and the night was passed in arranging those able measures which, on the morning of the 5th October, better known as the 13th Vendemiaire, or Day of the Sections, were crowned by that complete overthrow of the popular party, which Bonaparte himself has so well described.* The new constitution was established, and with it the Directory, the head of which, Barras, proved still the friend of Bonaparte, who thus became general-in-chief of the Army of the Interior and commandant of Paris.

In this latter capacity it was that the new general, under the following circumstances, first obtained a particular interview with Josephine. As military governor of the capital, he had been charged with disarming the citizens. In this way, the sword of the Vicomte de Beauharnais had come into the possession of General Bonaparte. Eugene, whose temperament, though reserved, was highly enthusiastic, and whose reverential admiration of his father's character had already taken deep root in such a disposition, learning this fact, determined on recovering so precious a relic. At this time, though not more than fourteen, he presented himself, both with boldness and address, at the levee of the commander-in-chief, requesting the restoration of his father's sword. The countenance and frank bearing of the boy pleased the young soldier, who immediately,

* See Author's Translation of Bourrienne's Memoirs, vol. i. p. 33, 1st edition: p. 37 2d edition. Constable's Miscellany, vol. lvii.

with his own hand, restored the object of filial solicitude. Kissing the sword, Eugene thanked, with a flood of grateful tears, him whom he called his indulgent benefactor, and all this in a manner so simple and touching, that Bonaparte was charmed with his demeanour.

On the morrow, Madame de Beauharnais called at the hotel of head-quarters of the Interior, to thank the general for his condescension to her son. To this interview, now related from Eugene's own account, has erroneously been attributed the first meeting of Josephine with her future husband: the incident only served to infuse a particular interest into the previous acquaintance of the parties. Bonaparte returned the visit. Upon one of such fastidious taste, the graceful charm of Josephine's manners was certainly calculated to produce a lively effect, but considerable influence must likewise be allowed to the means which she could command of aiding his projects of young ambition. Passion there unquestionably was on his part, but on both sides this eventful union appears, in the first instance, to have been one of calculation. His hold upon *steady* office was yet precarious; his increasing intimacy with Madame de Beauharnais, and through her with Madame de Tallien, daily connected him more closely with the men in power. That Josephine, however, viewed both a second marriage, and the character of her present suitor, with excusable apprehension, is evident from the following letter, the address of which has not been exactly recovered, but the authenticity of the communication is not to be doubted:—

"My dear Friend,—I am urged to marry again: my friends counsel the measure, my aunt almost lays her injunctions upon me to the same effect, and my children entreat my compliance. Why are you not here to give me your advice in this important

conjuncture? to persuade me that I ought to consent to a union which must put an end to the irksomeness of my present position? Your friendship, in which I have already experienced so much to praise, would render you clearsighted for my interests; and I should decide without hesitation as soon as you had spoken. You have met General Bonaparte in my house. Well!—he it is who would supply a father's place to the orphans of Alexander de Beauharnais, and a husband's to his widow.

"'Do you love him?' you will ask. Not exactly. 'You then dislike him?' Not quite so bad; but I find myself in that state of indifference which is any thing but agreeable, and which to devotees in religion gives more trouble than all their other peccadilloes. Love, being a species of worship, also requires that one feel very differently from all this; and hence the need I have of your advice, which might fix the perpetual irresolution of my feeble character. To assume a determination has ever appeared fatiguing to my Creole supineness, which finds it infinitely more convenient to follow the will of others.

"I admire the general's courage—the extent of his information, for on all subjects he talks equally well—and the quickness of his judgment, which enables him to seize the thoughts of others almost before they are expressed; but, I confess it, I shrink from the despotism he seems desirous of exercising over all who approach him. His searching glance has something singular and inexplicable, which imposes even on our Directors: judge if it may not intimidate a woman! Even—what ought to please me—the force of a passion, described with an energy that leaves not a doubt of his sincerity, is precisely the cause which arrests the consent I am often on the point of pronouncing.

"Being now past the heyday of youth, can I hope long to preserve that ardour of attachment which,

in the general, resembles a fit of delirium? If, after our union, he should cease to love me, will he not reproach me with what he will have sacrificed for my sake?—will he not regret a more brilliant marriage which he might have contracted? What shall I then reply?—what shall I do? I shall weep. Excellent resource! you will say. Good heavens! I know that all this can serve no end; but it has ever been thus; tears are the only resource left me when his poor heart, so easily chilled, has suffered. Write quickly, and do not fear to scold me, should you judge that I am wrong. You know that whatever comes from your pen will be taken in good part.

"Barras gives assurance, that if I marry the general, he will so contrive as to have him appointed to the command of the army of Italy. Yesterday, Bonaparte, speaking of this favour, which already excites murmuring among his fellow-soldiers, though it be as yet only a promise, said to me, 'Think they then I have need of their protection to arrive at power? Egregious mistake! They will all be but too happy one day should I condescend to grant them mine. My sword is by my side, and with it I will go far.'

"What say you to this security of success? is it not a proof of confidence springing from an excess of vanity? A general of brigade protect the heads of government! that, truly, is an event highly probable! I know not how it is, but sometimes this waywardness gains upon me to such a degree, that almost I believe possible whatever this singular man may take it in his head to attempt; and with his imagination, who can calculate what he will not undertake?

"Here we all regret you, and console ourselves for your prolonged absence only by thinking of you every minute, and by endeavouring to follow you step by step through the beautiful country you are

now traversing. Were I sure of meeting you in Italy, I would get married to-morrow, upon condition of following the general; but we might, perhaps, cross each other on the route: thus I deem it more prudent to wait for your reply before taking my determination. Speed, then, your answer—and your return still more.

"Madame Tallien gives me in commission to tell you, that she loves you tenderly. She is always beautiful and good; employing her immense influence only to obtain pardon for the unfortunate who address themselves to her; and adding to her acquiescence an air of satisfaction, which gives her the appearance of being the person obliged. Her friendship for me is ingenuous and affectionate. I assure you, that the love I bear towards her resembles my affection for you. This will give you an idea of the attachment I feel for her. Hortense becomes more and more amiable; her charming figure developes itself; and I should have fitting occasion, if so inclined, to make troublesome reflections upon villanous Time, which merely adorns one at the expense of another! Happily, I have got quite a different crotchet in my head at present, and skip all dismals, in order to occupy my thoughts solely with a future which promises to be happy, since we shall soon be reunited, never again to be separated. Were it not for this marriage, which puts me out, I should, despite of all, be quite gay; but while it remains to be disposed of, I shall torment myself; once concluded, *come what may*, I shall be resigned. I am habituated to suffering; and if destined to fresh sorrows, I think I could endure them, provided my children, my aunt, and you were spared me. We have agreed to cut short the conclusions of our letters,—so adieu, my friend."

We know not what answer was returned, but its import may be shrewdly guessed. The privilege to

scold could hardly be mistaken by a clearsighted and good-natured friend. Meanwhile winter passed rapidly away in a correspondence between the principal parties. The new duties of the young general occupied every hour of the day, but his evenings were devoted to the society of Josephine. Frequently he gave public breakfasts, at which Madame de Beauharnais was already looked upon as presiding, though the presence of Madame Tallien, and other ladies, rendered these reunions both less particular and more brilliant. In Josephine's modest mansion, again, he was wont to meet a small, but valuable circle, composed of those who, while they favoured his suit, were able likewise to promote his interests, as soon as these should become united with the fortunes of her whom he loved. Well might she, in bitterness of soul, accuse him of being an ingrate, when afterward he sacrificed her by whom he had risen! Where passion thus prompted, and ambition urged, Bonaparte was not the man to fail, gifted, as he appears to have been, from Josephine's own confession, with unequalled powers of persuasion. The manner, indeed, in which, long afterward, she is represented as speaking of Napoleon being incomparably the most fascinating man she had ever known, strongly reminds us of the opinion which a distinguished female has left recorded on the seductive conversation of Burns. At the same time, the incidental remarks of the ex-empress enable us to explain the very opposite character which those less acquainted with him have given of Bonaparte. Though warmly attached to the sex, he entertained but a mean opinion both of the talents and virtue of women, and on rare occasions only attempted to be pleasing in their society. When taxed by her with the carelessness of his address, he would repeat, "*Rien ne valait Josephine*,"—Josephine, compared with you, all are naught.

Thus passed the winter of 1795: the nuptials were solemnized, according to the revolutionary forms, by the appearance of the contracting parties before the civil magistrate, March 9, 1796. The ceremony took place in presence of the two directors Barras and Tallien, who, with Calmelet, a lawyer, and Lemarois, the general's aid-de-camp, signed as witnesses the act recorded on the municipal register of Paris. Barras fully redeemed the pledge alluded to in the preceding letter; and only twelve days after his union with Josephine, Bonaparte set out for Italy as commander-in-chief of the republican armies in that country. To trace the brilliant progress of his arms in this first and astonishing campaign belongs not to our humble task. The contest, as is well known, began by the battle of *Monte-Notte*, amid the defiles of the Maritime Alps, and with the enemy's watch-fires almost in sight of France; the struggle closed upon the confines of the Hereditary States, after the Austrians had been beaten along the richest plains and most extensive mountain range of Europe. "In a year," he had formerly answered, on youth being objected to his holding command, "in a year I shall be old, or dead." Ten months had sufficed to bear the tricolour in triumph from the shores of the Mediterranean to the Adriatic Gulf, and to inscribe the name of Bonaparte among the foremost on the records of warfare. Not even the dazzling illusions of youthful glory, however, could fill the void caused by separation from Josephine. The numerous letters written to his wife during this remarkable campaign, breathe the most romantic passion, expressed in the most ardent language. Whether the published portion of this correspondence be quite genuine, may indeed be questioned, but that communications of the same passionate character were constantly addressed to his newly-wedded bride, is admitted. Nor, though, from various causes, we de-

cline introducing here any of these singular effusions, do the surmises urged against their authenticity appear conclusive. Bourrienne, for instance, while he does not absolutely refuse his credence, evidently entertains suspicions, founded on the hyperbolical style of the printed epistles. True, these differ, in this respect, from one of the same date which he produces, and from others which the reader may subsequently meet with in the present volume; but when Bonaparte's character is considered, cold by nature, yet highly artificial, and from the preponderance of imagination over sensibility, delighting in artificial excitement, exaggeration in language and sentiment is to be expected. Moreover, at every period of life, his literary tastes evince a strong bias to admiration of the inflated, in preference to simplicity. In truth, every composition remaining of this extraordinary man which rises ever so little above mere details, exhibits the same tendency to a turgid, but striking phraseology, that, as the instrument of a powerful mind, captivates the fancy, or rouses the passions; but neither comes from nor reaches the heart. At the same time, there can be little doubt that many of the letters now particularly referred to have undergone considerable alteration. A large proportion of those said to have been written during this first campaign, found their way into the journals of the day, and in the process of their passing to the public, underwent certain changes to suit circumstances. From the newspapers, they have been transferred to the *Contemporaine*, and other anonymous collections, wherein they now appear. Of these alterations Josephine herself complains, in writing to her aunt at a later period of this campaign. "I enclose the general's last letter, and add another received at the same time from my son, who is likewise yours, and whose note you will therefore read with a mother's feelings. The jour-

nals have altered both these documents: I send them as they were actually written."

*From General Bonaparte to his Wife.*

"My beloved Friend,—My first laurel is due to my country; my second shall be yours. While pressing Alvinzi, I thought of France; when he was beaten, I thought of you. Your son will send you a scarf surrendered to him by Colonel Morback, whom he took prisoner with his own hand. You see, madam, that our Eugene is worthy of his father. Do not deem me altogether undeserving of having succeeded to that brave and unfortunate general, under whom I should have felt honoured to have learned to conquer. I embrace you.

"Bonaparte."

*From Colonel Eugene Beauharnais to his Mother.*

"My dear and respected Mother,—Detained at Lyons by business, I cannot resist my impatience to commune with you. I have been so fortunate as to perform, under the eye of General Bonaparte, an action which obtained his approbation, and has inspired me with a more honourable opinion of myself. In taking prisoner an Austrian lieutenant-colonel, I thought of my father; I was seen by the general, and felt conscious that you would applaud me. What motives to serve one's country! These encouragements will at all times be the same, and they will ever possess the same influence over my heart. Hang up the scarf in your cabinet, under the portrait of my father, to whom, with you, I render this homage. As to the one woven and given me by Hortense, tell her it shall not easily be taken from the wearer. We intend to make the Austrians very prodigals in this respect, but are all resolved to

continue towards them the same niggards as heretofore!

"Farewell, my good and gracious mother! Eight days hence, and my noble gray shall be put to his mettle, as if with a bound I could place myself at your feet."

We have anticipated somewhat, in order to introduce these characteristic notes, for Eugene did not join his father-in-law until late in the present campaign. Meanwhile the following anecdote, among many others, will show Bonaparte's attachment to his wife, at the same time it exhibits a singular instance of the restless desire displayed throughout his whole career, of trying conclusions with futurity often from the most trivial incidents. At the time of his marriage, he had employed Isabey to paint, in the exquisite style of that artist, a miniature of Josephine. This, in battle and in march, he constantly wore about his person. In "the rough and stirring course" upon which he was now launched, it could not, to ordinary feelings, be matter of marvel if accident should occur to the portrait. But the feelings of the youthful conqueror of Italy were not, either for good or evil, of a common character. The glass covering the miniature was found to have been broken—how, he knew not. From this simple occurrence, he immediately conceived a presentiment of the death of the original, and enjoyed no peace of mind till the return of a courier despatched express to bring him tidings of Josephine! The reader has here a pendant to the story of the djerm *Italy*, as narrated by Bourrienne, except that, in the latter, the prediction, if the natural inference from the state of things could be so termed, was fulfilled.

While Josephine thus constituted the distant object of all this fond solicitude to a husband who had not yet ceased to be a lover, she herself led a life of comparative seclusion, devoted to the education of

her children. She appears early to have divined the jealous temper of her partner, and, in strict fulfilment of the resolution expressed in one of her letters, "my mind once made up, come what will, I shall be resigned," she began by humouring it from the first. Fond, therefore, as she was of society —high as were the qualities she could bring to adorn or to sweeten its intercourse, both during the campaigns of Italy, and especially of Egypt, her doors were closed even against her friends, and she herself appeared in company only to glean information, or watch over the interest of the ungrateful man whose absurd suspicions at that moment infused bitterness into an existence that but reflected the sunshine or the cloud which appeared on his brow. In all this, the merit was, in the first instance, the greater, that the conduct flowed from principle, uninfluenced by passion. Josephine certainly did not marry Bonaparte from attachment: a desire to provide a protector to her daughter, a guide for her son, were her own motives; the representations of her friends accomplished the rest. Time, and experience of those fascinations which she herself described as unequalled, ripened the grateful feelings of a mother's heart into a love and admiration which, for uncomplaining self-devotedness in the most painful of all sacrifices, stands pre-eminent in the sad story of unrequited affection. It is not without indignation, therefore, in which every reader of correct feeling will participate, that we read in anonymous and ill-informed English publications that Josephine's character on the score of gallantry was indifferent. But to this subject we shall be obliged frequently to revert.

After signing the preliminaries at Leoben, in Carinthia, Bonaparte returned, by way of Laybach, Trieste, Padua, Verona, and Mantua, to Milan. Arriving in this ancient capital of Lombardy on the 5th of May, 1797, he established head-quarters at

Montebello, a beautiful seat about six miles distant, and now, for the first time since his marriage, enjoyed the society of Josephine, who, by appointment, had repaired thither from Paris. In this arrangement, her husband consulted both his affection and his political interests. While at Montebello, and afterward at Passeriano, he transacted the affairs of his victorious army, and conducted the negotiations terminating in the peace of Campo-Formio,—she presided, with equal propriety and grace, over the gay circles at Milan, which wanted nothing but the name to be already a court. "I conquer provinces," said Bonaparte of her conduct at this time, "Josephine gains hearts." Frequently afterward did she revert to this as one of the happiest periods of her life. The gallant youth of the Army of Italy, the grateful Milanese, and the Austrian envoys vied, but from very different motives, in assiduous attention to one beloved and honoured of him who had made the two former what they were,—victorious and free, and who to the latter could increase or soften the bitterness of defeat. She enjoyed, too, an opportunity of realizing, in part, a long-cherished wish of visiting a land of lofty reminiscences and present humiliation. One of the most delightful excursions which even Italy offers is from Milan to the lakes. This was among the very first scenes visited by Bonaparte and Josephine in each other's company. After seeing the Lake of Como, they drove through the rich fields and vine-clad acclivities, across to Lago Maggiore. Embarking on this magnificent expanse, whose waters reflect at once the gayest and most stupendous objects—from the glittering villa to the hoary Alp, they landed, in succession, on those fairy paradises, the Borromean Islands. Of these the Isola Bella, with its numerous arcades, hanging gardens, and anchorite palace, was Bonaparte's favourite—as might naturally be supposed, calculated, as it is,

to excite the imagination, rather than to gratify the taste. Here the party made considerable stay On one of the marble terraces, a splendid orange-tree was pointed out to the writer as the scene of a little adventure. Josephine, with one or two ladies, had taken her station under the tree, and while they were engaged in admiring the distant landscape, the general slipped up unperceived, and by a sudden shake brought down a shower of the golden fruit among the fair group. All her companions ran off screaming in affright, Josephine alone remained unmoved. This partial failure of his stratagem seemed somewhat to pique the contriver. "Why, Josephine," he observed, half-ironically, "you stand fire like one of my veterans."—"And wherefore should it be otherwise?" was the appropriate reply; "am I not the wife of their commander?" There is here so much of delicate tact, that it were to be wished the anecdote rested on better authority than can yet be quoted in its support.

Several absurd stories have been related, and till lately believed, of Bonaparte's impatience during the negotiations with Austria, and particularly of his having crushed to pieces a china jar in the presence, or even of having thrown it at the head, of Count de Cobentzel, the Austrian plenipotentiary. Bourrienne's "We knew better the rules of good-breeding at Passeriano," has settled all that; and we may introduce here an anecdote of the count's brother. One day, Josephine—a very rare disposition on her part, be it remembered—wishing to draw amusement from his noted avarice, asked him to be her partner to play at a whist table. They were, *of course*, in bad luck: at every new infliction *his partner* addressed him in accents of well-feigned condolence, "I am grieved, count, to see you lose so much, but next rubber we shall be more fortunate;" consolation which pierced him to the very soul, for, considering with whom he played, the sup-

position that the stake must be an enormous one, was natural enough. Meanwhile, next hand was dealt, and another, and another. Madame Bonaparte committed blunder upon blunder (she played, by-the-way, one of the best games in France), which tripled the disasters of her unfortunate associate, whose chagrin appeared, even despite the courtier, for it could not be concealed, but wrought upon him to such a degree that big drops of perspiration rolled over his elongated visage. At length, the party, which, to his imagination, had threatened to be eternal, broke up. The trembling ambassador inquired, in a low, suppressed tone, what he had lost. "Nothing, my lord," answered Josephine; "a circumstance that will explain the source of the philosophy which enabled me to support our reverses." At these words the count's face resumed its wonted rotundity, or, at least, shook off its assumed longitude, and showed him to be but too happy in getting off with a fright. The man, besides his appointments, possessed an estate of twelve thousand a year!

Josephine, however, amid even the happiness of first power, was not without her own annoyances at Milan. The most dangerous of these were exactly of that kind to which the candour of her disposition might have rendered exposure the more perilous. The Directory, conscious already of their own weakness, and consequently jealous of any other power in the state, looked with distrust upon the astonishing success and popularity of their commander in Italy. His ambitious views, too, so openly expressed, as even to have their influence in deterring Josephine from espousing him, had not, perhaps, altogether escaped their suspicions. Circumstances, however, had constrained these masters of France to employ, and subsequently to dissemble with Bonaparte. They filled with their creatures and spies the head-quarters at Passeriano, and the mimic court of

Milan. But the precautions of her husband, and still more her own temper, secured Josephine from the worst effects of this espionage. Throughout the whole course of his life, Bonaparte lived in continual apprehension of female influence. So far did he carry this jealousy of freedom, that, in more than one instance, especial favourites were dismissed on the bare supposition, that they themselves, or the world for them, believed in their possessing important confidence. The celebrated Madame Ganzani, as we shall afterward have occasion to show, is a case in point. Not only did this general principle obtain as a rule of conduct towards his wife, but her sentiments, uniformly inclined to moderation, were generally opposed to his vast schemes of aggrandizement, and consequently offered little encouragement to communication. The candour or, as some will have it, weakness of Josephine's nature rendered concealment irksome to her. "Ma femme est genée par un secret," observed Napoleon,—"a secret is burdensome to my wife;" and he took care that she should not be thus encumbered. Such were the causes which, at this date, while they kept Josephine a stranger to the plots preceding the 18th Fructidor, also secured her against the arts of that Directory in whose cause her husband matured that revolution with such consummate art.

Of this denial of confidence Josephine sometimes complained. It is evident, however, that it proceeded not from the cause assigned by her enemies; namely, Bonaparte's distrust of her prudence, or low estimation of her understanding. To the observations just offered on this point may be added a remark of her own, which clearly shows both her husband's disposition and how much more accurately than others she understood his character. "During the many years we have now passed together" (the observation belongs to the year 1804), "I have never once beheld Bonaparte for a moment

perfectly at ease—not even with myself. He is constantly on the alert. If at any time he appear to show a little confidence, it is merely a feint to throw the person with whom he converses off his guard, and to draw forth his real sentiments; but never does he himself disclose his entire thoughts." What a life was this! ever on the rack—always watching and warding. This truth had struck us even before we knew of this confession by so excellent an authority, and if the reader will take the trouble to recall the instances which he may have met with, when Bonaparte is represented as in his *moment d'abandon*, he will be led to conclude that these apparently careless moods were assumed for some purpose; that they were followed by no consequences, or by effects totally opposite to those expressed by the other parties. Bourrienne, in particular, evidently has been the dupe of this affected openness, and so far appears never to have penetrated the secret of Napoleon's character.

One course of unmixed pleasure, during this sojourn at Milan, Josephine derived from the society of her children. The whole family had remained at Paris after the general's departure to push his first adventurous fortunes in Italy. It bespeaks, too, both an affection for his youthful charge, and a kindness of heart not usually assigned as one of the features of his character, that even amid the distractions and important cares of such a campaign, Bonaparte maintained and encouraged a literary correspondence with these children of his adoption. Hortense accompanied her mother to Italy in April, 1797; Eugene had previously joined his father-in-law towards the close of the campaign, and had "fleshed his maiden sword" in the rencounters which immediately preceded the fall of Mantua. To these occurrences the letters already quoted refer: he was then in his seventeenth year; nor is the coincidence without its interest, that from amid the same

battle-fields where he had begun his career as a simple aid-de-camp should have been dated, eighteen years thereafter, his last orders to an army when, on thus bidding his companions in arms farewell, he descended from the second military dignity in Europe.

After the general's departure for the Congress of Rastadt, Josephine, with Eugene and Hortense, remained behind at Milan. In this arrangement, sanctioned as it was by his own appointment, there is, perhaps, to be discovered no unequivocal evidence that Bonaparte's views of ulterior ambition were already maturing in his mind, and were contemplated by himself as less distant than they appeared to others. In Italy he had gathered golden opinions of all men, by the expulsion of the Austrians, the establishment of the Cisalpine Republic, and artful promises of further independence for the Italians. He left, too, in that country, and under faithful lieutenants, a noble army, devoted to their commander. In short, he thus possessed resources either to fall back upon, or to call forwards, as occasion might require, should the popular dispositions seem to favour the contempt which he already entertained for the weakness of the Directory. In looking to the very possibility of such things, it imported greatly to withdraw every pledge from beyond the power of those whose overthrow was meditated. Josephine and her children at Milan left him unfettered in Paris. In his early career, however, Bonaparte showed himself one of the most dexterous of a class that has ever produced the most dangerous, as well as successful, enemies of liberty,—aristocratical democrats, men found in every country and period, who carry the people and popular sentiment with them a certain length, and then contrive "to whistle both down the wind," as soon as their own strength enables them to turn sharp round upon their former professions. This was the secret of his rise; too

open disregard of the same policy the most decisive cause of his fall. In the present instance, his triumphant progress through Switzerland to Rastadt—the universal acclaim with which he was hailed throughout France and its capital, gave Bonaparte assurance, that to overturn a despised and tyrannical government would prove no difficult matter; but he perceived, at the same time, that, as yet, he could command neither the influence nor the force to mislead or constrain the nation to his own purposes; and those rulers whom he could not supplant he resolved to support, as convenient occupiers of a place he regarded as his own. Josephine was thus summoned to rejoin him soon after his return to Paris. But, without attributing to the circumstance all the importance now assigned, it is certain that her longer stay at Milan suited both the interests and the pleasure of her husband. It might be deemed, therefore, an incredible instance of ignorant malevolence, to impute this protracted abode in Italy to her love of gallantry, were not such an absurd accusation to be met with in writings which, very unworthily, have attracted some notice. What is still more melancholy, thenceforward began those persecutions and misrepresentations which imbittered her domestic peace. Over these, in the present case, it was easy to triumph; but against such insinuations, incessantly repeated, and to a most jealous ear, perfect innocence alone could have been a protection.

On the 12th of April, 1798, the invasion of England having been found impracticable, Bonaparte was appointed commander-in-chief of the Army of the East. During the period of wonderful exertion which followed, in organizing an armament that, till then, had not existed—while her husband passed the day, and frequently great part of the night, in his cabinet, or at the Luxembourg, in wringing from the Directory reluctant consent to his measures—

Josephine, in the saloon, was equally active in attaching new or confirming old adherents. Never were those conciliating manners for which she was so celebrated more successfully employed, than in the dawn of her husband's fortunes. Not a few of the heroic youth of France were thus won to a standard which they were destined to unfurl over so many prostrate capitals of Europe, rendering their names watchwords in the history of her warfare. Under the same auspices, too, were at this time contracted some unions, more in accordance with her own gentle character. Thus, Marmont, then a young officer of artillery, espoused Mademoiselle Perregeaux; and Lavalette, the general's favourite aid-de-camp, received the hand of a daughter of the Marquis de Beauharnais. "Habit," said the empress, long afterward, "has rendered the practice familiar; but there is only one occasion on which I would voluntarily use *I will*; namely, when I would say, '*I will* that all around me be happy!'" In those two instances, at least, this wish was gratified. Marshal Marmont, one of the most skilful and honourable of the imperial generals, was also in his domestic relations one of the most amiable and fortunate of men; "a distinction," observes a writer on this very subject, "infinitely more enviable than military renown." The respect entertained by Josephine for the brother of her first husband, has already been noticed. His daughter she had trained up with all a mother's tenderness; and the heroic character of Madame Lavalette does honour to the memory of her noble benefactress.*

Early in May, Bonaparte left Paris to embark for Egypt,—an important crisis in his and in Josephine's fate. In order that he might enjoy to the latest hour the charms of her society, his wife accom-

* The reader need hardly be reminded through what devotedness of attachment Madame Lavalette effected her husband's escape from prison, in 1815, after the second abdication.

panied him to Toulon. Here she at length wrung from him a kind of promise to be allowed to follow, so soon as affairs in the East should render such a step prudent. All his persuasions against this proceeding had been repelled, with an anxious fondness which showed how truly she was in earnest. Meanwhile, the moment for embarking arrived. Their parting has been described as most tender. It was the separation of those who love, and who part under the feeling that they may never meet again. The whole sea appeared to be covered with ships; Josephine's eyes were fixed on the admiral's vessel, the *L'Orient*, alone, which bore from her sight her husband and her son, until the lessening sails had melted into the horizon; then, turning away, found herself once more alone in the world.

## CHAPTER V.

**Accident at Plombières—Josephine's Danger—Hortense—Anecdotes · Education—Anecdotes—The Ghost—Malmaison—Barras and Josephine—Vindication—Emigrants—Jealousy of Bonaparte—Letter from his Wife—Josephine in private Life—Letter to Eugene—Domestic Details—Occupations—Debts of Josephine—Uncertainty—Thoughts of Divorce—Anecdotes—Talleyrand—Return of Bonaparte—Misunderstandings—Reconciliation.**

IMMEDIATELY after the sailing of the eastern armament on the 19th of May, Josephine set out from Toulon on a visit to Plombières, whose medicinal springs have long been celebrated for their efficacy in restoring maternity. Here it had been agreed, on parting, that she should remain till the return of a frigate, which Bonaparte had promised to send for her on effecting a landing in Egypt. Thus, in all probability, her stay would not exceed many weeks; and this interval she joyfully consented to

pass in taking the waters. An accident, however, of a very frightful nature, and which in its consequences might have been fatal, detained her for several months at Plombières. Madame Bonaparte, a few days after her arrival, was sitting one morning in the saloon at work, and conversing with the ladies of her society, among whom were Mesdames de Crigny, afterward married to the celebrated Denon, and De Cambes. The latter, who was in the balcony entertaining the party with what passed in the street, expressed great admiration of a beautiful little dog which she observed below. Upon this all eagerly rushed upon the balcony, which came down with a fearful crash. Happily, no lives were lost; but the unfortunate individual who had been the innocent cause of the accident had her thigh-bone fractured, and Josephine herself was grievously bruised. The contusions on her hands and arms were so severe that for some time she had to be fed like an infant. Charvet, afterward steward of the household, who was at this time principal male domestic, happening to be in a room immediately above, hastened to the assistance of his mistress, and by his direction a sheep was instantly killed, and Madame Bonaparte wrapped up in the hide yet warm from the animal. By this simple remedy not only was the present pain allayed, but a preparation made for more scientific and fortunately successful treatment.

As a solace in the hours of confinement, Josephine sent for her daughter all the way from St. Germain. Hortense, now in her fifteenth year, was at this period a boarder in the celebrated establishment of Madame Campan. Charvet and our old friend Euphemie were despatched on a mission which, exclusive of its cause, could hardly fail of being agreeable to any youthful inmate of a boarding-school, but to one whose motto appears to have been,

"Mirth, with thee I choose to live."

such an invitation must have proved doubly pleasing. Accordingly, we might quote various reminiscences of this holyday journey,—of the vast havoc committed among sweet cakes and sugarplums, and especially of the mortal fear which roused from their noonday slumbers the guardians of the future Queen of Holland. The carriage was slowly proceeding through a forest wherein robbery and murder held traditionary residence. Partly to obtain forgetfulness of their apprehension, partly overcome by a southern sun in June, Charvet and Euphemie had each settled in the accustomed nook, when a sudden report struck on their "dreaming ear," with appalling loudness and proximity. Not once doubting that robbers had assailed them, they were ready, in the confusion of the moment, to exclaim with the varlet in the play,—"Oh, spare all I have, and take my life!" when their awakening senses were saluted and refreshed by a most odoriferous dew instead of the deadly scent of gunpowder. It turned out that Hortense had discharged upon her dozing companions the entire wrath, cork, contents, and all, of a bottle of champaign. The spirits of the youthful traveller suffered no abatement on arriving at Plombières; for she had the happiness of finding her mother rapidly recovering from the effects of her accident.

Opportunity has already occurred of showing, that though Josephine was the most affectionate of parents, she by no means improperly indulged her children. Her ideas of education were excellent, and carried into practice with all the requisite firmness. On this subject the following letter, published from an autograph of the empress, will be perused with equal interest and approbation. It respects, indeed, the conduct of one of her nieces, the daughter of the Marquis de Beauharnais, but exactly the same principles were acted upon in the treatment of her own daughter.

"My dear Madame Campan,—With my niece, whom I return to your charge, receive also my thanks and my reproof. The former are due for the great care and brilliant education which you have bestowed upon the child; the latter for the faults which your sagacity must have discovered, but which your indulgence has tolerated. The girl is gentle, but shy; well informed, but haughty; talented, but thoughtless; she does not please, and takes no pains to render herself agreeable. She conceives that the reputation of her uncle and the bravery of her father are every thing. Teach her, and that by the severest means, how absolutely unavailing are those qualities which are not personal. We live in an age where each is the author of his own fortunes; and if those who serve the state in the first ranks ought to have some advantages and enjoy some privileges, they should on that account strive only to render themselves more beloved and more useful. It is solely by acting thus that they can have some chance of excusing their good fortune in the eyes of envy. Of these things, my dear Madame Campan, you must not allow my niece to remain ignorant, and such are the instructions which in my name you should repeat to her constantly. It is my pleasure that she treat as equals every one of her companions, most of whom are better or as good as herself, their only inferiority consisting in not having relations so able or so fortunate."

What we regard at the time as the greatest misfortune often appears in the end to have been mercifully dispensed for our good. Such was Josephine's present case. She had bitterly lamented an accident which prevented the voyage to Egypt. The Pomona frigate, however, on board of which she had proposed to embark, was subsequently captured by the English cruisers in the Mediterranean. It is therefore probable that the confinement at

Plombières proved the cause of avoiding a still more tedious captivity in England. The preference which Josephine gave to this vessel over any other in the fleet arose from the circumstance, as already mentioned, of having crossed in the same ship from Martinico to France. The selection consequently would not have been altogether fortuitous, but the fact would not have been without its interest, to find Josephine, after an interval of years, voyaging in the same ship with prospects, feelings, and fortunes so widely dissimilar. But, in truth, the projected voyage to the East can hardly be regarded as a serious incident in the life of Josephine. That she herself was sincere in the wish expressed to accompany her husband there can be no doubt; but the general always opposed the intention, and only feigned to yield to her favourite argument, that, being a Creole by birth, her constitution would rather be improved by a residence in a southern climate. Almost every letter, as appears from those intercepted by our cruisers, which he wrote during the first months of the expedition, had for its object to combat his wife's intention, and the fall of the balcony finally decided the affair.

Madame Bonaparte remained at Plombières till towards autumn. It was upon the occasion of this visit that she attached to her person her principal valet-de-chambre, Carrat, a singular character, whose probity and long services permitted and excused many eccentricities and freedoms with his imperial mistress. The motives which induced her to receive this domestic into her service shows the condescension of Josephine towards her inferiors. At this time, Carrat, a youth of some address, and with nothing to do, used regularly every morning to carry to the hotel a nosegay, which he presented to Madame Bonaparte, in such an original manner, and with so many singular speeches, as greatly diverted her party, and especially Hortense. Having

thus excited an interest in his situation, he made his appearance, as usual, on the morning of their departure, and with tears began to lament his hard lot, in losing so kind a benefactress. Madame Bonaparte, with her wonted goodness, brought her protegé to Paris, had him taught by a celebrated *artiste*, and subsequently attached him to her service as *valet-de-chambre-coiffeur*. Carrat continued to be a very great favourite, and often furnished much amusement,—his excessive cowardice, in particular, being the unlucky subject of many practical jokes. One or two of these may show some of the domestic expedients resorted to, in order to kill time, during the many heavy months that rolled past without news from Egypt. One evening, soon after the purchase of Malmaison, Carrat received orders to attend Madame Bonaparte and her daughter, in their walk upon the highway, which runs along two sides of the park belonging to that once beautiful retreat. Enchanted with this mark of distinction, Carrat obeyed with alacrity; but had not advanced far, when he beheld slowly emerge from a hollow by the roadside a gigantic phantom, clothed, to all appearance, in a winding-sheet. No sooner had the trembling valet perceived this terrific figure, than he lost all sense of the dignity of his situation, as guard of honour; and sliding behind the ladies, exclaimed,—"Ah, madam! a spectre! a spectre! It's the ghost of the lady who died last night!" The phantom continued to approach, shaking its long white drapery. Carrat fell down in a fit; and, in his turn, sadly frightened the contrivers, lest they should have carried their plot too far. It is needless to add, that the ghost was a fellow-servant, dressed out under the superintendence of Hortense, the grand actor in all the conspiracies fomented at Malmaison against ennui, during the tedious winter of 1798. The following is another instance of ingenious tormenting.—The unlucky

Carrat happened to occupy a sleeping-room adjoining to a small closet, but separated therefrom by a deal partition. A hole being made in this partition, a cord was passed through, and fastened to a vessel full of water suspended from the ceiling immediately above the bed, in the dormitory aforesaid. Thus, by pulling the string, the operator in the closet could reverse the perpendicularity of the vase, and so discharge its refreshing contents on the unconscious victim below. Nor was this all. The supports of the bedstead had been partly removed, so that the whole fabric might be precipitated, the moment the incumbent should attempt a settlement. Things being duly prepared, the actors and *assistants*, to use a French phrase, consisting of Madame Bonaparte, her daughter, and the ladies of her household, took their station in the closet. Among his other singularities, Carrat always went to bed without a light; so, entering in the dark, he perceived nothing of the preparations for his reception, until, throwing himself heavily on his pallet, down he came; and, at the same time, the crash serving as a signal, the cord was twitched, and the superimminent liquid began to play its part in the catastrophe. Thus prostrated on the floor, drenched from above, and involved in profound obscurity, the unfortunate serving-man, driven to desperation, began to call out most lustily, "Help! murder! fire! drowning!" The utter inconsistency of these lamentations entirely overset the gravity of the operators in the closet; and one universal burst of laughter might have disclosed to Carrat the whole secret of his persecution. But Hortense had still something in reserve, and whispered, loud enough to be distinctly heard by the sufferer,—"Oh, mamma, how much the poor man is to be pitied; for the water is full of toads, frogs, and all sorts of insects!" Upon this, the vociferations were redoubled, till Carrat was finally relieved, and his fright com-

pensated by a douceur. From such incidents as these, however, it must not be inferred that Madame Bonaparte sported unfeelingly with the weakness of her dependants. On the contrary, she treated them with a familiarity and kindness which made Carrat himself, who was indulged in great license of remark, almost scold his mistress. "Now, madam, see to it. You condescend to joke with your servants. Well, the first opportunity, they will treat you with disrespect."—"No, no, my good Carrat, it is a contemptuous condescension, not real affability, which would encourage such a breach of duty." And Josephine was right. Never did any one more completely command the love of her domestics.

Malmaison has been incidentally mentioned; but it is proper that something more should be said concerning the acquisition of a residence which was the scene of much of Josephine's happiness in her grandeur, and the retreat where she sought and found repose after the day-dream of empire had fled for ever. When, through the protection of Barras, she had recovered a portion of her husband's estate, it appears to have been the intention of Madame de Beauharnais to purchase a small property in the vicinity of the capital, and there, in retirement, to devote herself to the education of her children. With these views, afterward so entirely altered by events, she had cast an eye upon Malmaison, a small residence, surrounded by grounds of a very limited extent, but presenting several fine prospects, and otherwise advantageously situated. This property had formed part of the national domains; and Barras undertook to arrange the purchase. At this time Josephine was residing with her aunt at Fontainbleau. The following is the letter which she wrote to the director in answer to one announcing the successful progress of the affair:

"*To Citizen Barras,*
"Member of the Executive Directory.

"SIR,—Nothing could be more agreeable than the statement in your letter; yet few things could have less surprised me. I know your influence, and more especially your zeal. I felt assured of your interest; and was not less confident of your success. Thus I find myself certain of possessing a refuge; and, thanks to the benevolence whose delicacy enhances the benefit, that asylum accords with my wishes. There I can resign my heart to its tastes—tastes peaceable and pure—which in the days of prosperity I cultivated through caprice or from fashion, but which I now cherish from predilection. With them I have also inspired my children: in these they have already experienced the amusement of their early years, and there they will continue to seek the enjoyment of maturer age. Heirs of a proscribed sire, modesty and obscurity suit both their desires and their condition. The way of life upon which we are to enter at Malmaison befits in all respects our inclinations and situation; and, notwithstanding immense losses, if the father of my children survived, I should not have a single wish to form. But had he lived, should I have known you? should I have been unfortunate? or should I have experienced how much benevolence may sooth the unhappy? Each situation of life must be taken with all its chances; the most painful may thus, perhaps, still exhibit something favourable, and of that, good sense consists in making the most. It is easy, will be the remark, to talk thus, when passion no longer agitates. I have undergone the ordeal,—a course of suffering, when for many months I could not even conceive one day of gladness. I had then only a choice of misfortunes. I believe them passed; and what you are now doing for me renews my life. In devoting it to solitude, to study, and to the education of my children, I shall

consecrate it to tranquil happiness, and to our unalterable gratitude."

As already related, Barras, by promoting her second marriage, rendered other arrangements less necessary, and the purchase of Malmaison was postponed. The address and tenor of the preceding letter, however, would lead us to inquire into the truth of reports circulated to the prejudice of Josephine, regarding the nature of her connexion with the director. But upon the most mature inquiry, we find nothing imputable either to the prudence or the virtue of her conduct. During the season of power, she lived the victim of rancorous enemies and jealous relatives, who envied and feared the influence which she rightfully possessed over the mind of her husband; the very possession of which influence, be it remembered, despite of his own wayward dispositions, incited by these means, and even at last of his interested inclinations, is the most triumphant proof of Josephine's innocence. The fabrications then invented to the prejudice of her reputation have been repeated and believed among us, not from hostility against a woman more generally admired and pitied than blamed, but because they implied vileness in the rise, and dishonour even in the greatness, of him whose political acts were opposed to our national prosperity. Time it is that justice be rendered to the injured; and if these pages shall conduce to the cause, they will not have been written in vain. There are few pleasures equal to the benevolent feeling experienced on the removal of a suspicion against one whom we are otherwise inclined to love.

The first intentions of purchasing Malmaison were thus interrupted; but when, during the Egyptian campaign, Bonaparte had expressed a desire to possess a country house near Paris, the design was again resumed. The general had intrusted this

commission to his brother Joseph, as appears from the following letter, which was intercepted by our cruisers, and published, but discredited: circumstances afterward proved its authenticity:

"*Cairo, 7th Thermidor* (*27th July*), 1798.

"You will see from the public papers and bulletins that Egypt is ours, and that the conquest has been sufficiently disputed to add another laurel to the military glory of this army. Egypt, in grain, rice, vegetables, and cattle, is the richest country which exists on the face of the earth. Barbarity is at its height. There is no money to be got; not even to pay the troops.

"I shall be in France in two months. Arrange in such a way, that on my arrival I may have a country house, either near Paris or in Burgundy.

"To citizen Joseph Bonaparte, deputy to the
"Council of Five Hundred."

This communication of course did not reach its destination; and, besides, Joseph was too busy with his own affairs to be able to give much attention to the merely personal comforts of his brother. But Josephine, ever anxiously solicitous to anticipate her husband's slightest wish, was more attentive, and after some hesitation between Ris and Malmaison, purchased the latter for the sum of a hundred and sixty thousand francs (rather more than six thousand guineas). The grounds, however, being originally very confined, were enlarged by subsequent purchases, which raised the whole value of the property to four hundred thousand francs, or nearly 17,000*l.* sterling. In embellishments, statues, paintings, furniture, and in reparations and additions to the house, enormous sums were at different times expended.

In this retreat, occupied by its modest improvement, and the education of her daughter, Josephine

passed the winter and succeeding summer of the Egyptian expedition. Her visiters, indeed, were numerous—that was a necessary consequence of rank and favour; but her intimates were very few, and selected from among her ancient female friends. Her intercourse with society, too, was rather extended than diminished; for the interests of her husband required that she should maintain that influence which as yet rested solely on an understanding with those in power; while her fears and affections equally prompted to watchfulness over the party feuds and varying relations of political connexion. All this, however, was conducted with that prudence and discernment which, securing every advantage to one in such a situation of living in the great world, observes and influences, without provoking observation or remark in return. Accordingly, numerous documents might be quoted, in proof of the interest which, during this period, Madame Bonaparte enjoyed with the members of the Directory, and of that interest having been more frequently employed in aid of the unfortunate than for personal purposes. The objects of her intercession were chiefly emigrants, many of whom at this time, and still greater numbers afterward, were, through her means, restored to their homes. Of those who were thus so deeply obliged, all did not continue to cherish a grateful remembrance of their benefactress. From the letters written on these occasions, the following is selected, as characteristic at once of the writer's generosity and candour, while it shows the influence commanded by her recommendation. It was written to a M. de Sansal, whose family had been known to Josephine previous to the Revolution:

"Sir,—Your petition, which reached Malmaison on the 12th, was presented the same evening, and by myself, to citizen Barras. On the morrow, it was referred to the proper office; placed on the list

on the 14th; examined for the first time on the 16th, and yesterday (20th) the definitive sentence was laid before government. I have the pleasure to announce to you, sir, that this decision is favourable; and that, now erased from the fatal list, you are restored to all the rights of a French citizen. But in transmitting a communication not less agreeable to me than to yourself, permit me to enhance its value by repeating to you the exact words with which it was accompanied by the director: 'I have usually little to deny to you, madam,' said he, presenting me with the sealed enclosure, containing the act of restoration; 'and certainly, when humanity is concerned, I can have far less objection; but pity for misfortune does not exclude justice, and justice is inseparable from a love of truth. That feeling constrains me to give M. de Sansal a salutary advice.—As unfortunate, M. de Sansal merits commiseration; but as an emigrant, he can have right to none. I will say more: had I been disposed to be severe, there existed a cause for stern reprisals on the part of a government to whose kindness he replies by insults. Although I despise those of such a man, I appreciate them: they prove an ungrateful heart, and a narrow mind. Others have done the evil—we endeavour to repair it: that surely is no reason why we should be disliked. If it be the cause of M. de Sansal's hatred, let him keep such baseness secret; for in expressing it he will expose himself to troublesome returns; and all my colleagues are not equally indulgent.'

"Blame only yourself, sir, for the small share of amenity in these counsels. They are harsh, perhaps, but useful; and you will do well to render them effective. Regard also the faithfulness with which I transcribe them, as a proof of the deep interest I take in your welfare, and of my anxiety that the interference of your friends may be justified by your future conduct."

While Josephine thus possessed the power to protect others, it is not to be supposed that her influence or knowledge would remain unexercised in her husband's behalf. Doubtless the information which she afterward communicated to the general, on his return, tended to the success of the measures which he then adopted; while the presence of his wife at Paris rendered his situation less hazardous in Cairo. The correspondence, however, which has been confidently stated as regularly taking place between them, overland, by various routes, is all a fabrication. During the early period of the expedition, indeed, while our cruisers had not so completely blocked up the Mediterranean, as the destruction of the French fleet at Aboukir afterward enabled them to effect, such intercourse was not unfrequent. And though, from time to time, throughout the whole of the campaign, a lucky chance brought communications from Egypt, not one, for many a month before his own adventurous flight, reached Bonaparte from France. Of hastening that melancholy voyage Josephine was not only not the cause, by her letters, but, as will appear, she remained in total ignorance of his movements, up to the hour of her husband's landing on the territory of France.

During the first months of the expedition, while, as just stated, an almost uninterrupted correspondence took place, Bonaparte's letters to his wife expressed the most tender and confiding affection. This continued, when, by chance, communications reached home, up to the period of the departure for Syria. But Josephine was surrounded in her retreat at Malmaison by concealed enemies, who eagerly watched in order to misrepresent every action; and in the Syrian camp there were found creatures base enough to become the instruments of conveying these slanders to their destination. The reader is referred to the scene at the springs of Messoudiah, between Junot and his commander, which, as depicted

by Bourrienne, forms one of the most dramatic and striking passages recorded in the history of human jealousy and weakness. Her accusers, too, possessed here an advantage over Josephine, in that, while they had infused the poison, application of the remedy was hourly becoming more difficult. So adverse, indeed, were circumstances in this respect, that, while the dreadful truth of her honour having been attacked, and the accusation having been credited, too fatally appeared in the letters received from her husband, it is doubtful whether the following artless but convincing reply was received by Bonaparte until after his return to France. Two things are certain,—that he came home unreconciled, and that his letters, written immediately after the indiscreet and unmanly conduct of Junot, almost broke Josephine's heart. Her appeal against these injurious aspersions is noble in itself, and must prove interesting to the reader, from the incidental traits which it contains of her character and situation at the present period of our narrative :

*Josephine, to General Bonaparte.*

"Can it be possible, my friend? is the letter indeed yours which I have just received? Scarcely can I give it credence, on comparing the present with those now before me, and to which your love gave so many charms! my eyes cannot doubt that those pages which rend my heart are too surely yours; but my soul refuses to admit that yours could have dictated those lines, which, to the ardent joy experienced on hearing from you, have caused to succeed the mortal grief of reading the expressions of a displeasure, the more afflicting to me that it must have proved a source of fearful pain to you.

"I am wholly ignorant in what I can have offended, to create an enemy so determined to ruin my repose by interrupting yours; but surely it must be a

grave reason which can thus induce some one unceasingly to renew against me calumnies of such a specious nature as to be admitted, even for a moment, by one who hitherto has deemed me worthy of his entire affection and confidence. These two sentiments are necessary to my happiness; and if they were so speedily to be refused me, ah! why was I ever made sensible of the delight of possessing them? Far better would it have been for me never to have known you!

"When I first became acquainted with you, over whelmed in sadness from the sorrows that had over taken me, I believed it impossible that I should ever again feel a sentiment approaching to love. The scenes of blood I had witnessed, and whose victim I had been, pursued me everywhere. Such were the causes which prevented apprehension in often meeting you: little did I imagine that I could for a single instant fix your choice. As did all the world, I admired your genius and your talents; more truly than any other did I foresee your coming glory; but notwithstanding all this I was unmoved,—loving you only for the services you had rendered to my country. You should have left me to cherish this admiration, and not have sought to render it impassioned, by employing those means of pleasing which you above all men possess, if, so soon after having united your destiny to mine, you were to regret the felicity which you alone had taught me to enjoy.

"Do you believe that it is possible for me ever to forget your cares and your love? Think you I can ever become indifferent about one who sweetens existence by all that is delightful in passion? Can I ever efface from my memory your kindness to Hortense—your counsel and example to Eugene? If this appear to you impossible, how can you suspect me of being interested for a single moment in what is alien to you?

"Oh! my friend, in place of lending an ear to

impostors, who, from motives which I explain not, seek to ruin our happiness, why do you not rather reduce them to silence, by the recital of your benefits to a woman whose character has never incurred the suspicion of ingratitude? On hearing what you have done for my children, my traducers would be silent, since they must know that, as a mother, I first became attached to you. Since that event, so dear to my remembrance, your conduct, admired as it has been throughout the whole of Europe, has, in my heart, but awakened deeper adoration of the husband who made choice of me, poor as I was, and unhappy. Every step which you take adds to the splendour of the name I bear—and is such a moment seized to persuade you that I no longer love you! What absurdity—or rather what vileness on the part of your companions, jealous as they are of your marked superiority. Yes, my friend, I love you with a sincerity known well, even to those who assert the contrary. They must be conscious of wronging me, for several times have I written to them in order thus to hear of you, to entreat them to watch over you, and by their affection to console you for the absence of your *friend;* finally, to keep me informed of every thing connected with you. But how have these people acted, who pretend such devotion, in whom you confide, and according to whose report you judge me with inconceivable injustice? They conceal from you whatever might lessen the pain of absence; they take advantage of your suspicious character in order to create disquietudes that may induce you to quit a country which they detest; and the more they irritate you the better they are pleased. Such is the light in which things appear to me, while you are deceived regarding their perfidious intentions. Believe me, my friend, so soon as you ceased to be their equal you became their foe; your victories even are but so many motives for their hating you.

"I know these intrigues, though I disdain to avenge myself by naming men whom I despise, but whose valour and abilities may be useful to you in the grand enterprise so happily commenced. On your return I will disclose my secret, and show you who are those envious of your glory. But no—when we are united once again, I shall forget all the evil which they would have wrought me, to remember only the exertions which they may have made in your service.

"It is true I see much company, for every one strives to be foremost in complimenting me on your success, and I confess that I have not the resolution to shut my door against any one who comes to speak of you. My male visiters even are very numerous; they comprehend your daring achievements better than women; they talk with enthusiasm of all your noble deeds, while at the same time they cannot complain of your having taken with you their spouse, their brother, or their father. Women fall upon these subjects, and when they do not praise you, they no longer please me. Still it is among my own sex that I find those whose heart and understanding I prefer to all, because their friendship for you is sincere. Of these I place first the names of the accomplished ladies D'Aiguillon, Tallien, and my aunt. These are my intimates—I never quit them and they will tell you, ungrateful as thou art, if I have thought '*of playing the coquette with all the world.*' These are your own expressions, and they would be odious to me were I not certain that you have disavowed, and at this moment are sorry for having written them.

"I tremble when I think of the dangers which surround you—of more than half of which I should be ignorant, did not Eugene reiterate his requests to me to write you not to expose yourself to perils, and to take more care of a life, not only dear to your family and your friends, but upon which hangs the destiny

of your brethren in arms, and of thousands of brave followers who could have courage to endure so many fatigues while under your eye alone. Let me conjure you, my friend, not to exceed your strength, and to listen less to your own daring than to the counsels of those who love you. Berthier, Bourrienne, Eugene, Caffarelli, less ardent, may also sometimes see more clearly. They are devoted to you; listen, then, to them, *but to them only*—you understand me?—then both you and I will be happier.

"Here I receive honours which sometimes cause me embarrassment. Besides, being little accustomed to such homage, I see they displease *our authorities*, who, always distrustful and apprehensive of losing their power, are ever on the watch. *Disregard these people*, you will say; but, my friend, they will endeavour to hurt you; they will accuse you of seeking to lessen their power; and I should be grieved to contribute in aught to a jealousy which your triumphs sufficiently justify. When you shall return covered with new laurels, good heavens! what will they do, if already they are on the rack! I cannot calculate where their resentment will stop; but then you will be by my side, and I shall feel secure.

"Let us think no more of them, nor of your suspicions, which I will not refute one by one, because they are all equally devoid of probability. But to repose from disagreeables, let me conclude with some details which will interest you, because they affect me.

"Hortense, that she may console me so far as depends upon her, employs all her little art to conceal her fears on your account and her brother's, and puts in requisition all the resources of her mind, in order to dissipate that sadness—to you so dubious—which yet never leaves me. By her talents, and the charm of her conversation, she sometimes contrives to call up a smile; then, in her joy, she

exclaims, '*Dear mamma, they shall know that in Cairo!*' Cairo! the name instantly reminds me of the distance which separates me from my husband and my son—and my grief returns. I am thus obliged, by great effort, to dissemble with my daughter, who, by a word—a look even—transports me to those scenes whence she would win my reflections.

"In the graces of her person Hortense improves daily; she dresses with taste; and, certainly without being nearly so beautiful as your sisters, she could hardly fail to please even when they are present. My good aunt passes her life in suffering, without complaint, consoling the afflicted, talking to me of you, and in making verses. As for me, I beguile the time in writing to you, listening to your praises, or reading the journals, where your name occurs in every page. I am ever thinking of you; now transporting myself to the time when I shall see you every hour—now plunged in sorrow at the thoughts of the space which must elapse before your return; and when I thus conclude, I again begin. Are these, then, the signs of indifference? I wish for none other on your part; and if you feel thus for me, I shall not think myself altogether an object of pity, despite the small slanders which they would fain have me credit respecting a *certain fair one*, who, they tell me, interests you deeply. Why should I doubt you? You assure me that I am beloved. I judge of you by my own heart—and I believe you.

"God knows when or where this letter may reach you: may it restore to you a repose which you ought never to have foregone, and more than ever give you an assurance, that, while I live, you will be dear to me as on the day of our last separation Farewell, my only friend! Confide in me—love me, and receive a thousand tender caresses."

The candour, tenderness, and delicacy of this letter may safely be left to the reader, in whose

reflection the innocence of the writer will doubtless constitute the prominent conviction. It seems impossible that such should be the composition of a guilty mind, even had we no other assurance of the purity of Josephine's. How well, too, her professions of attachment agree with those expressed at a previous period, and unknown to its object, appears from the following note, written during the earlier part of the Italian campaign. Both documents, it will likewise be observed, prove the correctness of those details already given, respecting the merely prudential motives which in the first place originated, and the ardent attachment which succeeded, their marriage.

*Madame Bonaparte, to her Aunt.*

"Are you happy? Such, my dear aunt, is the question which you put to me, and to which more than one answer may be given. Yes, I am happy, both as a mother and as a wife. Were there ever children more amiable, more beloved, or more deserving of affection? is there a husband who can confer higher respect on her whom he honours with his name? Yet it is he—it is that adored husband who constitutes at once my glory and my misery. Ah! how many sleepless nights do his victories cost me! Probably he would be less ambitious of laurels did he behold each leaf of his bedewed with my tears. But what do I say? The wife of a Frenchman, ought I not also to bear a French heart? Before I was a wife—before I was a mother, I was a citizen; and did not Alexander teach me to prefer that to every other title? His worthy successor, who possesses all my love, is likewise the heir of his sentiments; let me, by participating in the same, merit the *honoured title* of the widow of De Beauharnais, and the *honourable title* of the wife of Bonaparte. What an illustrious association of glory! How noble

a communion of fame! May the happiness which fled from the one ever attend upon the other!"

While thus suffering under a twofold cause of unhappiness,—absence from the husband of her affections, and the still more bitter consciousness of his ungrateful suspicions, the love of her children still remained the stay upon which Josephine's heart reposed its hopes and attachments. In the preceding letter to the general, she mentions the solicitude of Eugene for his safety, but delicately omits to state how frequently her own letters to her son contained injunctions to the same effect. This correspondence, indeed, formed one of her most pleasing resources. The following letter is selected as agreeable in itself, and as filling up the picture of Josephine's domestic life at this period, hitherto so unjustly misrepresented:

*Madame Bonaparte, to Eugene.*

"I learn, with the greatest pleasure, my dear Eugene, that you have held a line of conduct worthy of your own name and of the protector under whose eye you enjoy the happiness of learning how to become a great captain.

"Bonaparte writes me that you are every thing that he desires. As *he* is no flatterer, my heart experiences great joy when I read your praises traced by a pen which, in general, is not prodigal of eulogy. You know I have ever considered yours as a soul capable of great enterprises, and I have never doubted of that brilliant courage which is your heritage; but you know, also, how much I ever dreaded seeing you removed from me, fearing, as I did, lest your natural impetuosity should sometimes carry you too far, and prevent your submitting to the thousand petty obligations of discipline so disagreeable to one in a subaltern rank. Judge, then, of my satisfaction on receiving the assurance

that you have remembered my advice, and are as submissive to your superiors as you are kind and humane to those under your command. This conduct, my son, *renders me happy*. These words will, I know, be esteemed by you a more precious recompense than every other reward. Read them often, then, and assure yourself that your mother, though distant from the son of her love, complains not of her lot, since yours promises to be brilliant as it deserves.

"Your sister participates in all these my feelings; she is now writing, and will tell you so herself; but what she will not boast of, and which I must therefore state, is her attention to me and our aunt. It is impossible to give you an idea even of her amiableness in this respect, nor of half her affectionate contrivances to beguile us of our anxieties. Love her, my son, for she forms my consolation, and is devoted to you. She continues her studies with great success, but music, I am inclined to believe, will prove the accomplishment in which she is destined to excel. Her agreeable voice, now much improved, and the style of her execution, will greatly surprise you. I have just purchased for her a piano, the excellence of which seems to have redoubled her passion for your favourite art,—a preference probably not a little contributing to your sister's predilection.

"If you were here, you would a hundred times a day advise me to take care of the men who offer attentions to Hortense, in a manner sufficiently marked. There are some very urgent in their addresses, who are no favourites of yours, and whom you apprehend she may prefer. Reassure yourself on that point; she is somewhat of a coquette, and enjoys her success by tormenting her victims; but her heart is free. I am the confidant of all her thoughts and sentiments; these are ever as they should be. She knows that henceforth my consent alone will not suffice in the question of marriage, and that my

wishes even will be determined by *his* to whom we owe all. This will guard her against any choice which would not be approved of by Bonaparte, and he will never bestow your sister's hand save on a brother in arms, as seems also to be your desire.

"Our society is always agreeable, from a mixture of distinguished artists and men of letters, who meet our grave politicians. The latter would prove great bores, were they not thus obliged to talk of something else than politics,—a subject not very interesting to the ladies, who comprehend nothing about the matter. Only let France be happy—this is all we wish, without giving ourselves the trouble to inquire by what means such happiness is to be secured. That care belongs to the magistrates who govern, and the brave men who defend the country; ours is only, or ought to be, the delightful task to encourage them, by approval, to perseverance; a duty, I assure you, which we discharge with all faithfulness.

"Speak to me as often as possible of Bonaparte, of yourself, and about our friends; but conceal every thing which might induce me to suppose that you have enemies among your companions. That would prove too afflicting an addition to the sorrow occasioned by my separation from you, by exciting apprehensions of those quarrels which spring up without cause, and too often end in a tragical close! I stand in need of the support which I wish to derive from the belief that your adopted father has around him none but admirers, and that you meet only with protectors and advisers of your youth.

"Adieu, my dear son. I know it is very useless to repeat here, that my affection passes all bounds; for of that you are convinced; but I find so much pleasure in *prosing* upon the subject, that you must even bear with me. Besides, I am not afraid of tiring you with those family details which would appear trifling to most men, surrounded as you are

by objects so interesting and important. I know you love your relations even more than renown; and therefore I prattle away of our affairs at great length. So, my beloved Eugene, accept a thousand renewed assurances of your mother's attachment; and allow her to give you in fancy all those marks of endearment which she would much rather lavish upon you in reality.

"Write me as often as you possibly can. Even that will not be enough."

Among her other recreations, the cultivation of flowers, at this period, beguiled Josephine of many a heavy hour. Some part of every day she passed in superintending her gardeners; and often both mother and daughter were to be found in the grounds of Malmaison, watering, pruning, or transplanting particular favourite plants, with their own hands. The disappointments of after-life, and, perhaps, ill health, seem to have wrought a change in the tastes of Hortense; but this simple love of nature remained with her mother through life. The following note shows with how much simplicity this amusement was pursued, and that, as yet, those of Madame Bonaparte were any thing but expensive pleasures:

*Note for Hortense at Fontainbleau.*

"My dearest Girl,—There grows in the forest of Fontainbleau a plant of the genus *Chenopodium*, named *Blète effilée*, and is the *spinach-strawberry* of gardeners. You will easily distinguish it by the peculiarity of bearing fruit shaped and coloured exactly like strawberries. As it is a deep-rooted plant, and does not agree with transplanting, you will take care to have it dug up with a large portion of the surrounding turf, and packed in a quantity of the light earth in which it grows. The whole to be sent forward in good condition, by Goodman Phe-

dart's cart, who returns here by easy journeys. My gardener, Spire, tells me that he has transplanted the *Blète* into a richer soil, and by cultivation, transformed the plant into a real strawberry. I believe not a word of this; but, as it costs next to nothing, there is no harm in trying the experiment."

With these quiet tastes it is difficult to reconcile the enormous expenditure of which Josephine is accused; nor has it always been remembered that her embarrassments in this respect arose rather from the unfair dealings of others, excused in some measure by the fluctuating state of things, than from her own extravagance. A very considerable portion, too, of her early debts was contracted at this very period, in consequence of purchases and improvements at Malmaison. Another luxury which, from her first residence in the country, began to manifest itself, as appears from the little anecdote of the ghost already quoted, and which has been animadverted upon as a singular caprice, was her practice of constantly preferring some one of the dirty highways surrounding the park to a walk in the fresh, beautiful, and retired alleys of Malmaison. But we seek for relaxation and amusement chiefly in change, and on this principle, without any accusation of vulgarity of taste, may we account for Josephine's temporary preference of the bustle and novelty of a public road to the verdant retreats and flower-bordered paths where she passed the day. It is, moreover, to be recollected, that these walks had often for their object some purpose of humanity. She loved to inquire of the labourer, as he hastened homewards in the evening, concerning his family and means of subsistence. The same unpretending kindness of heart which, in the midst of grandeur, rendered her so desirous of laying aside all unnecessary state, led her now familiarly to accost the villagers and peasantry, and to listen with interest to the humble story

of their joys and sorrows. Many of those walks which, by the unthinking or unfeeling, have been held up for our amusement as the caprices of a vulgar mind requiring repose from the greatness thrust upon it, might have been traced to the cottage of the sick and the aged, or to the abode where honest industry had been crossed by misfortune. Perhaps some readers may recollect with the writer, that on visiting these scenes, even many years after the inmates of Malmaison had ceased to interest as living characters, there still lingered among the grateful peasantry the remembrance of many a trait honourable to Josephine.

Occupied thus in public and private benevolence —in the pleasures of society and domestic engagements—in watching over the political interests, and endeavouring, by the most affectionate means, to retain her place in the heart of her husband,—Josephine was enabled to bear with more outward composure his unjust suspicions. But a new subject of disquiet began to present itself. What had been the fate of that husband? Where were his companions in arms? Where was her son? If the correspondence with the East had from the first been uncertain and interrupted, it became much more so after the army experienced a check, and murmurs had broken out even among the commanders of the expedition. Not only were the English cruisers daily rendering the communication with France more precarious, but the policy pursued at head-quarters in Cairo and Alexandria was, to intercept altogether the correspondence destined for Europe. The battle of Aboukir, the Syrian expedition, the utter worthlessness of the conquests made, were subjects upon which truth would certainly have produced the most dangerous consequences to the views of the commander-in-chief at home. Hence, for many months previous to his return, while no despatches were received in Egypt, only vague and contradictory reports

reached France from the East. Under these circumstances, Josephine's alarm and uncertainty were necessarily very great. Reports of the death of the general were in circulation, and even without attaching much credit to these, the circumstances of his being so far distant, without a fleet, and beset by enemies on every hand, might well seem to render his return doubtful, and the destruction of his power as inevitable. To an ordinary man, perhaps, both of these would probably have been the result of the Egyptian campaign.

Urged, it is said, by these considerations, and most probably encouraged by the advice of secret enemies, Josephine resolved on a divorce from her husband. The instrument is reported to have been actually prepared, and the matter about to be laid before the proper tribunal. Before taking this decisive step, Madame Bonaparte consulted M. de Canteleu, then a distinguished member of the administration, and subsequently one of the imperial senators. This gentleman represented to her, that even supposing the general ruined, or in captivity, his name was yet a title not lightly to be resigned, as it gave her a consideration which would cease with the cause. In short, his arguments so fully prevailed, that she tore the papers in his presence, and never afterward for a moment entertained the idea of a separation. Very few individuals knew of these circumstances, so curious in themselves, and hitherto not even suspected by the public, till the detail appeared a few months ago, in the journal of the Baroness de V——, one of the ladies of honour to the empress. The secret was confided by M. de Canteleu himself, under a promise of fidelity, and as a mark of regard: "His death," to quote the words of the narrator, "and that of Josephine, permit me to disclose it, with every assurance of its truth."

We are not, perhaps, authorized altogether to discredit a fact stated under such circumstances, and

with no apparent motive for publishing an untruth. At the same time, though a favourite with Josephine, to whom, it may be remarked, she was introduced by M. de Canteleu, the baroness hardly shows herself friendly to the memory of a kind mistress. She dwells with more pleasure upon weaknesses than virtues; and, from the first, a secret supporter of the exiled princes, professing to have been constrained, in some sort, by necessity, in accepting an appointment at the imperial court, she seizes every occasion to hold up its characters and economy in satirical exhibition. In this endeavour, it must be acknowledged, the Madame la Baronne displays great liveliness of remark, some wit, and considerable talent—but withal an ill-regulated mind. Of this last there can be no better proof than the offer, which she herself gravely records, to assassinate Bonaparte on his return from Elba. "My plan," to use her own words, "was simple; it consisted in providing myself with a pair of small pistols and a postchaise. I believed myself certain of being permitted to approach Napoleon; but as to surviving him, that never entered into my thoughts: I was prepared to fall beneath the blows of his attendants. My first step was to practise firing with a pistol; my second, to confide my secret to some one attached to the king, and who could aid me. I selected Prince Polignac, whose own devotedness to the king led me to think he would approve of mine." The prince had the honour, the good sense, and the humanity to reject this proposal; and while he persuaded the lady to return to her family, faithfully kept her secret. This is the same nobleman to whom of late has been attributed every thing that is base and wicked. Bad men do not usually act like Prince Polignac, where they have even a chance to take off their enemies, and secure their own power.

But to return: While her situation afforded to our authority the best opportunities of observation, her

very hostility renders her testimony valuable, so far as concerns the good qualities of Josephine's character, and in other respects, making allowance for exaggeration, there appears no ground for suspecting misstatements. While there seems thus every reason to give credit to the idea of a divorce, it assumes greater likelihood on other motives than those above. Under the double provocation of insulting suspicions, then, and wounded affections—for, from the letter already quoted, it is evident that Josephine was no stranger to her husband's *liaison* with the wife of a subaltern, at Cairo—it is not improbable that Madame Bonaparte may have entertained thoughts of divorce. She, too, was surrounded by false friends, whose interests lay in widening the domestic breach; and, excited thus, perhaps, to a still more exasperated sense of her injuries, appears to have expressed her resolution in terms which she afterward regretted. There can be little doubt that this expression of passing resentment reached the ears of Bonaparte,—a circumstance which, best of all others, explains the anxiety evinced by his wife to obtain an interview before he had seen his brothers. We can hardly believe, however, that there was any thing serious in all this. The circumstance of Bonaparte, amid the deserts of Syria, and Josephine, in the capital of France, each resolving upon renouncement and separation, while both cherished a mutual attachment, the very strength of which appeared from these passionate declarations, presents neither a new nor a singular incident in the history of the human heart.

Some time subsequent to the preceding events, and from the same cause, occurred an incident which, in its remote consequences, excited considerable influence on the happiness of Josephine. Between Talleyrand, who, throughout the whole of his long and varied life, has ever been at the feet of power, and the subject of these Memoirs, there

always existed a kind of mutual distrust, or rather the feeling appertained exclusively to the prince, for though the memory of the injured may sleep, the consciousness of the aggressor never slumbers. This, according to Josephine's own account, originated in the following manner: While doubt and uncertainty thus involved the fate of the Egyptian armament and its leader, Madame Bonaparte naturally sought information, or, it may be, relief, in society. Hence, instead of restraining the intercourse already described, she rather enlarged the circle of her acquaintance. On the occasion of a grand entertainment given by Barras, she found herself placed on one hand of Talleyrand, with Madame de Tallien on the other. Hitherto this accomplished courtier had been assiduous in paying the most respectful attentions to the wife of the commander of the Army of the East. On this night, however, while lavishing on her companion the whole grace of his politeness, he seemed to have forgotten that Madame Bonaparte was even present. This appeared too directly the reverse of his former conduct to escape remark. As Madame de Tallien, through her influence with Barras, might for the moment be regarded as the dominant star in France, and as Josephine knew Talleyrand to be the "pink of courtesy," but, at the same time, a perfect man of the world, a suspicion flashed upon her mind, that information must have arrived of Bonaparte's death, since she was now treated with so little consideration. Overpowered by this reflection, aggravated as it was by the sense of personal disrespect, she rose and left the table in tears. According to her own words, Josephine had reason to believe that Talleyrand never forgot, and had the barbarity afterward to act as if she could not sincerely forgive, this aggression.

The dauntless spirit over whose fate doubt and mystery thus hung was at this very time pursuing a

solitary and mournful flight across a sea so lately covered with his armaments. On the evening of the 9th of November, 1799, a numerous company, including all the most distinguished in the capital of France, had assembled at Gohier's, President of the Directory. The guests had sat down to the amply furnished board; enjoyment was the order of the hour, when, in the very midst of their gay converse, a telegraphic announcement communicated to their host, "Bonaparte landed this morning at Frejus," hushed for an instant the brilliant circle in silent amazement. The whispered tale died upon the ear, and he who had raised the wine-cup to the lip put it down unpledged. Each surveyed the others as men who strive to conceal their own, but would read their neighbour's thoughts. Yet would it have been difficult exactly to analyze these thoughts: there was nothing definite either of hope or apprehension, but all seemed as if struck with a consciousness that things new and strange might be the issue of what they had just learned.

There was, however, one present to whom the name spoke of near and positive interests, but with scarcely less of apprehension. Josephine, on thus unexpectedly hearing of her husband's return, whispered an anxious adieu to her friends around, and retired. She determined on setting off instantly to meet Bonaparte, well knowing how much it imported to their reconciliation and future happiness that she should obtain a first interview, before others had an opportunity to poison his mind afresh by new calumnies. Before setting out the same night, it is stated by some authorities, that she made fruitless applications to several confidential friends, among others to M. de Cantelieu, to accompany her on so important a journey. This is not likely; the least appearance of distrust would in any case have been impolitic, and to a temperament such as she had now to deal with most offensive. Josephine well knew this, and

also that her power over Bonaparte's mind must reside in her own influence alone, or cease altogether. She therefore left Paris early on the morning of the 10th, accompanied only by her daughter. Unfortunately, all this anxiety was without result; she had proceeded with the utmost diligence, night and day, without even alighting, as far as Lyons; here she learned that the general had passed, having taken the western route to Paris, by the Bourbonnois, instead of pursuing the more direct road through Burgundy, by which she had come. She instantly retraced her steps; but it was too late—the mischief had been done. When, about midnight of the 18th, Josephine alighted, utterly exhausted, at their house, Rue Chantereine, Bonaparte had already been some time in Paris.

Thus were rendered fruitless both the present and former precautions. Lucien Bonaparte had indeed been disappointed in like manner; but Joseph and his sisters, who had remained in Paris, had of course seen their brother, and represented matters according to their own views. Josephine had been so anxious to prevent this, that, many months before, she had written to Eugene,—"It is hardly possible to administer a dose of patience sufficient to enable me to await your return, with nothing more than the due share of anxiety. If you know, therefore, when or in what part of France you will disembark, send me information by all means, that I may descry your vessel at a distance, and be with you the moment you approach the land. That will be happiness indeed, compared with my present state, as you can well conceive." Josephine's greatest enemies were those of her own house,—if the expression may be allowed,—her brothers and sisters-in-law, who, needy and rapacious, and totally dependent on their brother, viewed with jealous alarm any influence, however legitimate, which threatened the exclusive empire they wished to maintain over his mind. But in ex-

citing his resentment at such a crisis, they acted most impolitically, as regarded even their own interests. Nothing could have more completely marred the best contrived measures for attaining power than presenting to the nation the aspirant to public favour engaged in domestic squabbles with his wife. A laugh goes in most cases for more than an argument; but among a fickle and not over-punctilious people, such is the power of ridicule, that had France beheld Bonaparte figuring as the hero of a scandalous process, at the very moment when a nothing might have turned the tables, and exposed him as a deserter from Egypt, it is little likely that she would so speedily have hailed him Consul. Such inferences, indeed, seem not altogether to have escaped his own penetration. His favourite apothegm, "There is but a single step from the sublime to the ridiculous," could never have been more appositely applied; and of this one or two confidential friends laboured to convince him. But at first he would listen only to his own jealous irritation; and "divorce, open and public divorce," was his constant threat. Amid all this sound and fury, however, it did not escape those best acquainted with his dispositions, that love for Josephine was still a paramount feeling, and that he strove to lash himself into a conviction which might seem to justify such extremity. "She will appear," said an old and tried friend, "will explain matters —you will forgive all, and recover tranquillity."—"I forgive!—never! You know me. Were I not sure of my resolution, I would pluck out this heart, and cast it into the fire!" replied Bonaparte, accompanying the last asseveration with a furious gesture.

Some have stated that Josephine, on arriving found her effects already packed up, and placed in the court. This is not exactly correct, though her reception was harsh enough. On entering the small circular family room, she found her husband alone with Joseph, who looked on in silence during the

scene which ensued. Bonaparte, scarcely permitting his wife to enter, desired her, in the severest tone, instantly to retire to Malmaison. She silently turned away, and retired to her own apartment. Bonaparte continued to traverse, with hasty strides, the room where this brief interview had taken place. In a few minutes Josephine was observed descending, in tears, followed by Eugene and Hortense, both weeping bitterly. Bonaparte had not, perhaps, been prepared for such dignified and silent acquiescence, nor are we entitled to refuse credit to his own assurance on this occasion—"My heart was not formed to witness tears without emotion." He followed and brought back Eugene, who persisted for some time in a determination to accompany his mother. Upon this, the two ladies returned also, but without a word spoken by the general. During the two following days, no intercourse took place between the estranged parties; but the paroxysms of resentment gradually subsiding, Bonaparte entered the apartment wherein his wife and her daughter had held themselves secluded. Josephine was seated leaning on a toilet table, her face buried in both hands, and the silent tears stealing from between her beautiful fingers. On the table lay open the letters she had received during the eastern expedition. Hortense stood, half-concealed within the drapery of the window. Neither seemed to observe the general's entrance, who, advancing in silence, appeared for a moment irresolute: "Josephine!" said he, after a pause. Josephine looked up—"Mon ami," her usual expression of endearment, was ventured in timid hesitation. Bonaparte held out his hand. The explanation which followed, though at first not unaccompanied with violent expressions, left not a shade of suspicion on his mind, nor was their union ever afterward disturbed from the same cause.

## CHAPTER VI.

Political Retrospect—State of France—Josephine a Royalist—Conduct of Bonaparte—Eugene—Anecdotes—Ventriloquism—The Stammerers—Morning of the 18th Brumaire—The Consul—Marriage of Caroline Bonaparte and Murat—Treachery of the King of Naples—Josephine's Letter to the Emperor—Installation in the Tuileries—First Assembly—Josephine's Dress—Description of her Person—Residence at Malmaison—Attempts to assassinate the Consul—Anecdotes—Marengo—Anecdotes—Return—Amusements at Malmaison—Emigrants—Kindness of Josephine—Anecdote—Infernal Machine—Anecdotes—Marriage of Louis and Hortense—Letters—Flotilla—Nelson—Peace of Amiens—Brilliant State of France—English Visiters—Fox, &c.—Invasion—Camp of Boulogne—Anecdotes—Death of the Duke D'Enghien—Despair of Josephine—Conspiracy of Pichegru, &c.—Preparations for the Empire.

On returning from the East, Bonaparte found that affairs in France had undergone a change much to the disadvantage of the nation, but, for that very reason, not unfavourable to his own views of aggrandizement. Defeat abroad had prepared the public mind to hail the return of a general whose name was associated with victory; while imbecility, anarchy, and civil war, at home, had gone far to reconcile all parties to one whose decision of character might hold out a prospect of stable government. These dispositions had been strongly manifested by the universal acclaim attendant on his progress from the time he had first pressed the soil of France to his arrival in Paris; and both interest and inclination urged a speedy appeal to the popular sentiment.—The congress of Rastadt, the fruit of his victories, and in which he left French influence triumphant, had come to nothing, or rather had turned against the republic. Italy, the scene of his early glory, after having been basely seized, contrary to the treaties he had formerly sanctioned, and as foolishly revolutionized into Roman, Parthenopean, &c. republics, by the

Directory, had been finally wrested from their grasp by an Austro-Russian army, under Suwarrow. The bloody battle of Novi, fought when the *Muiron* frigate, the vessel which bore this new Cæsar from Egypt, had arrived within sight of the shores of Europe, sealed the disgrace of the republican arms. But here fortune was even doubly favourable; for Joubert, the commander in Italy, the only leader whose reputation might have clouded Napoleon's, perished in the conflict. On the Swiss confine there existed a secret but stern and justifiable hostility; for, during his absence, Switzerland had been invaded and revolutionized. On the German frontier, Jourdan and the French armies had been beaten in every rencounter with the Archduke Charles, and forced within the Rhine. On the side of Holland the danger was not less threatening; the Dutch had delivered up their fleet to an Anglo-Russian expedition, disclaimed their classical and republican cognomen, and declared for their ancient stadtholders. In brief, France, stripped of all her foreign conquests, beheld herself menaced on more than one point by hostile armies concentrating within sight of the "sacred territory." At home, the government, without resources or confidence, from the weakness and the peculation of all, and the cruelty of some of its measures, was viewed with equal contempt and indignation, while civil war had recommenced in the western provinces. Even the energy of party feeling, which, while it wrought, had also strengthened to endure the evil, had ceased in a great measure, and, with the exception of the return of the Bourbons, there hardly seemed a political scheme which promised relief from the present that might not be attempted successfully, if proposed by a leader possessing the renown and popular qualities of Bonaparte.

Thus, the crisis expected by him for nearly three years had at length arrived, when the nation would join in overturning a weak and tyrannical government,

without demanding pledges as to what form should be established in its room. The military part of France asked only a leader of military experience—the great body of the people looked to a change, no matter what, which might afford protection against existing disorder. Hence every thing conspired to turn all eyes upon Bonaparte. But the greatest caution on his part was indispensable; the government still possessed power, and might crush him in their suspicion ere his plans were matured. Now it was that he reaped the full harvest of that judicious conduct pursued by Josephine during his absence, as already described in her letters, and which had been so cruelly misrepresented. It was evidently his policy to keep himself retired, both to lull suspicion and to maintain the gloss of novelty.—Retirement, however, furnished opportunity, through Josephine's communications, of becoming more accurately informed of the real state of things. The Directory, which he actually overturned, consisted of Gohier, president, Barras, Sieyes, Ducos, and Moulins. With the president Josephine was very intimate, and appears to have entertained a sincere regard for Madame Gohier; over the second she had always maintained an influence, and thus, without taking into account her correspondence with the last two, she had possessed ample means of watching events at the fountain-head. Of the five, Sieyes possessed most authority, as being at the head of the *Moderates;* and of the views of this party, with which he subsequently saw reason to coalesce, Bonaparte was held informed by his brothers. In all the various interviews and intrigues preceding the famous 18th and 19th Brumaire, Josephine preserved an anxious watchfulness over her husband's demeanour, and often by address, during the visits of those whom it imported to conciliate or deceive, gave to the conversation a less dangerous turn, when the impetuosity of her partner had led him too far. To

do him justice, Bonaparte very readily and heartily praised these finesses, and in his moods of kindness used to term Josephine "his Mentor." Besides this tact in the *convenances* of society, Josephine had a prodigious memory, often put in requisition at all times for names and dates. We may judge of the pleasure received from such applications by the pains taken in order to acquire the power of replying to them. In the present instance, however, it is very doubtful that she rightly divined her husband's ulterior plans; indeed for some time they must have been but vaguely conceived, even by himself; one thing alone was fixed,—personal elevation, whereas there is reason to believe that Josephine entertained hopes for the Bourbons. All the predilections of her youth had been formed in kindliness towards unfortunate royalty. The class to which she belonged, and even the principles, republican as they were, of the Vicomte Beauharnais, had tended to cherish an attachment to the persons of the exiled family. Her intercessions with the Directory were generally in favour of expatriated royalists; and the society in which, from preference, she had mingled, during the absence of Napoleon in Egypt, tended to keep alive the remembrances of former days.—Among the few of the ancient noblesse still remaining in France her chief intimates were selected and Madame de Montesson, the widow of the Duke d'Orleans, the same lady who crowned Bonaparte with the mathematical laurel at Brienne, was her especial friend. In the graceful reunions at Tillet, the seat of the dutchess, Madame Bonaparte had been a constant and welcome guest, and that her children also were well known there, the following extract from a letter to Eugene abundantly shows:—"I have just returned from a visit to Tillet. The mistress of that charming retreat inquired about you, with an interest which made me love her the more, and by which you must consider yourself greatly

honoured; for *she* is no common pretender to attachments, and her judgment, founded, as it always is, on mature reflection, must be gratifying where it is favourable."

While Bonaparte was thus secretly maturing schemes of vast ambition, he seemed totally occupied with study and domestic society, and encouraged among the few who had accompanied his adventurous flight a similar unmarked demeanour. His favourite, Eugene, in particular, showed as if resolved to indemnify himself for long absence from Paris. Young Beauharnais, at this time, exhibited the same amiable character and solid understanding, with a dash of gayety and love of pleasure, by which he was distinguished in after-life. Without being handsome, there was something extremely prepossessing in his frank and manly countenance. His stature, though small (not exceeding five feet four inches), displayed a form active and well knit, though somewhat deficient in dignity, from a mincing gait,—a youthful affectation which, however, disappeared with the firmness and responsibilities of manhood and high enterprise. At this time, his chief amusement—one, too, not altogether without an object—was to give splendid breakfasts to the young officers of his own standing. At these entertainments, some amusing plot, such as is common among young people, was constantly occurring. Of these adventures Eugene was in the habit of giving entertaining recitals to his mother, and often to his father-in-law, who laughed very heartily at such displays, one or two of which may, therefore, be mentioned, on the report of an eyewitness. Ventriloquism was, about this time, attracting notice in Paris, through the performances of Thiemet, afterward so famous a professor of the art. One morning, when a gay circle of young officers breakfasted with Eugene, first one, then another, heard himself distinctly called out of the room, by the voice of his serving-man, until the whole party

had, in turn, made a fruitless expedition down-stairs. Each returned more amazed than another: and it was finally resolved to sally forth in a body. Thiemet, who, not personally known, save as a guest, to any of the party, had all this time continued quietly seated at table, opening his lips only to eat or drink, functions which he seemed to perform with great address, now rose to assist in the search of the invisible serving-men. No sooner had the party reached the hall, than the calls, all apparently from different quarters, were repeated; each scampered off in various pursuit of the supposed culprits, crying out, "Here! here's the rascal!" till, in the inextricable confusion, Eugene's loud laugh discovered the whole plot.—The greater part received it "as a passably excellent joke;" but some there were disposed to bestow the chastisement of the innocent valets on the guilty professor. "Nay, nay, gentlemen," interposed Eugene, "my friend Thiemet is not to blame; if you cannot forgive a frolic, the quarrel is mine." Upon this a second adjournment was made to the breakfast-table, and Thiemet restored good-humour by equally extraordinary, but less offensive, displays of his powers. Two young aids-de-camp had played off a successful trick upon their companions, who applied to Eugene. Young Beauharnais promised them their revenge. A numerous party, including the two *aids*, accepted an invitation to one of these, now celebrated, *dejeunes*. Matters were previously arranged among the conspirators, and the two victims seated at opposite sides of the table, each next an officer who appeared to be a stranger. The first cup of coffee had hardly been discussed, when high words were heard from the quarter in question. It appeared that both the strange officers were grievously afflicted with stammering, and no sooner had one made a remark, and the other replied, than a mortal quarrel ensued between them, each supposing that the other was mocking him. Their neighbours,

the aids-de-camp, kindly interposed to allay the animosity, and, for this purpose, had drawn their chairs quite close, in order better to expostulate and explain, for, in addition to their original infirmity, it now appeared that one of the stammerers was near-sighted, and the other dull of hearing. But nothing could avail.—"H-h-h-he i-i-is mo-mock-mocking m-m-me," was vociferated from both sides of the table, and each starting up, seized a huge vase, filled with water, which unhappily *chanced* to stand within reach, and discharged in great ire the whole contents across the table. The copious cascade missed its apparent aim, but descended with overwhelming certainty upon our friends the *aids*, who had so benevolently attempted to sooth the strife. The latter in turn now started to their feet, their splendid uniforms dripping from every point and lappet, and as soon as they had recovered breath, began to demand an explanation. The subdued titter around them did not tend to appease their wrath; but the whole table was set on a roar when, at the same moment, both exclaimed, "How, Thiemet!—What the devil, Bugazon!" for it was our old friend the ventriloquist, and a brother actor of the Theatre Française, who had personated the irascible stutterers.

Thus, in the domestic circle, the proper sphere of these Memoirs, nothing during the intervening month seemed to announce the famous revolution of the 18th and 19th Brumaire, which elevated Bonaparte to the consular dignity. To ordinary observers, the members of his family would have appeared engrossed in the pursuit of amusement, and he himself in the tranquil enjoyment of repose from the cares and anxieties of command. For the public transactions of this singular change, the reader is referred to Bourrienne.* Here a few private incidents may properly find a place. On the morning of the 18th, while the meeting of general officers took place in the

* See the translation in *Constable's Miscellany*, vol. i. p. 282, &c. 2d edition.

Rue Chantereine,—now Victoire,—and Josephine expected the president, Gohier, to breakfast, her son held also one of his entertainments, for which preparations had been made nearly a week before. Those invited consisted exclusively of young officers, and their meeting was gay as usual, but far more numerous. Among the guests, one, distinguished for his powers of mimicry, created infinite amusement to his companions, by successful caricatures of the members of the Directory. To exhibit, for instance, the person and demeanour of one, he dressed himself in a tablecloth, draped *à la Grecque*, stripped his black stock, rolled back his shirt-collar, and advanced with many affected graces, leaning his left arm on the shoulder of a younger companion, and with his right hand stroking his chin. "Barras! Barras!" shouted his comrades, thus crowning his exhibition with loud applause. But the representation is changed: enter again the young soldier, but scarcely to be recognised, his cravat stuffed with a huge roll of paper, his visage chalked into squalid paleness, and elongated to a most rueful length. With all this meagerness in the requisites of an *aimable*, he makes it appear that he aspires to pass for accomplished, and seizing a chair, after making some awkward caracoles, as if on horseback, down comes the cavalier with a heavy fall. Shouts of "Sieyes—the prick-eared abbé," resound from all corners of the room, and the officer rises to join in the ridicule which he has excited. Sieyes was at this time actually taking lessons at the riding-school in the Luxembourg! The breakfast was thus an excellent training for the grenadier charge in the hall of the deputies, and Eugene knew well what he was about. After appointing a rendezvous with his youthful associates to join the cortège, he hastened to meet his father-in-law.

On this day, in fact, the directors were deceived at all points. While the president was dressing for

breakfast, to which he had been invited by Madame Bonaparte, hearing a stir in the court of the Luxembourg, and putting his head out of a window, he beheld General Jubé, commandant of the consular guard, assembling it below. Jubé had been gained over by Bonaparte. "Citizen General," asked the simple president, "what are you about there?"—"Citizen President, you see I am assembling the guard."—"Doubtless I see that well enough; but why is it assembled?"—"Citizen President," answered the commandant, with great coolness, "I am to hold an inspection, and direct a grand manœuvre. Forward—march!"—"*Tant pis pour lui*,"—So much the worse for him, said Bonaparte to his wife, observing that Gohier had not appeared at her breakfast-table: and so much the worse it certainly was for him; for in a couple of hours poor Gohier was a prisoner in his own directorial palace.

During the 18th, Madame Bonaparte remained alone with Bourrienne. The events of that day were not calculated to awaken much uneasiness as to the result. But the rougher encounter of the 19th November ever awakened in her mind the most anxious inquietude, relieved, indeed, from time to time, by her husband's attention in despatching notes of what was passing at St. Cloud. When night, however, and even morning, had arrived without sight or tidings of him, she was in a state bordering on distraction. Josephine had in this state retired to bed, but not to sleep, when at length, about four in the morning, the *Consul* entered the apartment. From the time he took the oaths of his new office till he saw his wife, he spoke not to a single individual—as if he had wished that her voice should be the first to congratulate his accession to empire. A lively conversation ensued; Josephine, freed from her own fears, showed herself not forgetful of her friends; and Napoleon gayly announced that the fate of thirty millions of men had passed into his

hands, by the remark,—"Good-night—to-morrow we sleep in the Luxembourg!"

The public transactions of the consulate, except as supplying a method of arrangement, or when necessarily and intimately connected with our immediate subject, belong not to the present narrative. The events of this period may be classed under two grand divisions,—the measures conceived and executed by the First Consul for the regeneration and defence of France; and those proceedings which he imagined to be conducive or preparatory to his own personal elevation. In the former, Bonaparte claims our almost unqualified admiration: often great and wise, he is always clear-sighted, never unjust. In the latter, where his petty artifices and unworthy deceits do not incur our contempt, his crimes excite our abhorrence. Yet even under this mixed aspect, the consulate was the greatest blessing which revolutionary France had yet experienced; it saved her from the million, and from the imbecile self-conceit of the leaders of the million.

The residence of rather more than two months at the Luxembourg has been rightly termed the "Consulate preparatory." The only domestic event which occurred here of importance to Josephine was the marriage of Caroline with Murat. This match was especially agreeable to Madame Bonaparte; the young soldier held himself under obligations to her former patronage, and might, therefore, be expected to act as a friend in a family of enemies; and, secondly, by supporting Murat's suit, Josephine knew, that, while performing an agreeable service to her sister-in-law, she had also an opportunity of proving to the consul how groundless had been those suspicions infused into his mind regarding her sentiments for Murat. After some show of resistance on the part of her husband, who nevertheless avowed that he was far from displeased with the interest she took in the affair, Josephine

succeeded. There can be no stronger proof of the injustice generally of those dishonourable aspersions by which her enemies endeavoured to trouble her domestic peace, than the truth in the particular instance of Murat. He had first become known to her as the bearer of despatches to the Directory, announcing Bonaparte's first successes in Italy. Nothing could be more natural than her desire to procure promotion for one of the general's favourite aids-de-camp; and subsequently, by those attentions so flattering from a woman, and not confined, as we have seen, to him alone, she endeavoured to attach so gallant a soldier to the fortunes of her husband She admired, and knew how to appreciate, his daring valour in the field, a quality above all others valuable in his chief's system of warfare; but his selfish and vainglorious character always displeased her. "I dislike that man," said she, years after the events now mentioned, "and I fear him; he is too fawning with the emperor; he will betray him if ever opportunity and advantage suit." How the King of Naples fulfilled this prediction is well known. Josephine had another cause of dislike, and one of all others most unpardonable in a woman's eyes: if we may credit the scandalous chronicle of the consular and imperial court, Murat was at all times an active encourager of the infidelities of his brother-in-law. Under these circumstances, perfect forgiveness, both of ingratitude and injury, could hardly be expected on Josephine's part. But, when it is considered that the Queen of Naples had always joined with her enemies in their endeavours to estrange from her the affections of her husband, as a most amiable example of generosity of character, and nobleness of sentiment, we may introduce, while on this subject, though so far anticipating, the letter which was written by Josephine to Napoleon on the discovery of Murat's treachery:—

"SIRE, *Malmaison.*

"I have this instant learned that your suspicions are confirmed, and that the King of Naples, disregarding the most sacred ties of consanguinity and gratitude, has joined the ranks of your enemies. I have unfortunately nothing to say in his defence; and can find in my heart no solace for the devouring anxiety which yours must feel: what stronger proof that my own is without consolation! Still I cannot be silent; there are those around you who, too ready to aggravate the crime of the guilty, will but augment your sorrow, should their obsequious counsels lead to violent extremes. You know that I never have resisted your will, though I have sometimes had the courage to oppose your views, and ventured observations to which you rendered justice by changing your plans, and adopting those suggested by a weak woman. Suffer me still to use this privilege. The King of Naples is without excuse. But, sire, do not involve his wife in your vengeance, by depriving her of an affection to which she has ever attached a great value, and which it would be unjust to take from her, if, as I believe, that unhappy princess is in all things opposed to her husband's crime. Far from overwhelming her under the weight of a resentment which it is not probable she merits, address yourself to her heart, that she may employ all imaginable means to prevent the king from injuring you, and dishonouring himself.

"If things can no longer be remedied, and if you must be constrained henceforth to view as an enemy a brother who owes to you the crown which he is ready to disgrace,—ah! do not repulse the queen, when she will soon have none other save you upon whom she can rely; for you have often repeated, and history proves by a thousand examples, *that traitors never are successful in their treason.* The king, whom the hostile powers now treat as an ally,

will be sacrificed, should peace with you be his price —if, contrary to all appearances, they should prove conquerors, Murat would be equally the victim; for they would no longer tolerate a king whom they had previously treated as a usurper, but would hurl him from that throne which he now seeks to preserve, by means the most blameable and most impolitic, even by baseness itself.

"Pity your sister, sire; she has too much understanding not to have appreciated the fearful futurity which hangs over her. If ever she should be unfortunate, receive her again to your affections; and console yourself for the ingratitude of her husband by the enjoyment of the heartfelt attachment with which your moderation will inspire her. Remember, too, that if from the first impulses of even a just indignation you yield yourself up to the stern pleasure of rendering evil for evil, the consequences will eventually affect your innocent nephews, and sooner or later you must lament a severity which will have cost you so many tears. Sire, I plead in your own interest; reflect well before finally determining. Consult not those men whose facile temper merely follows all the variations of your own, but those devoted servants who are around you—brave and loyal brothers-in-arms—who never trafficked with their consciences, and who would have preferred even your displeasure to an advice that could compromise honour. Hear madame your mother. Finally, do not punish by your hate until it has been proved that you cannot pardon.

"Excuse, sire, what I have written. The fear of one day beholding you repent a too prompt condemnation has led me, perhaps, to displease you. The consciousness of discharging a duty has inspired me with courage on this so painful occasion. You will pardon a zeal, not officious, but sincere, which has led me so far as to presume to give advice; and you will say that Josephine has never ceased to be can-

did with him who of all men is the sincerest lover of that truth which yet he so rarely hears.

"To-morrow I expect Eugene; be pleased, sire, to tell him if you forgive me this letter, written with the desire ever dearest to my heart—of seeing you happy. Vengeance inflicted where a sister is concerned will not conduce to happiness when the bosom, like yours, is disposed to the soft emotions of fraternal love. Believe me ever, and preserve for me the friendship so precious to "JOSEPHINE."

The period of probation being expired, and new colleagues obtained, Bonaparte, now First Consul, finding the Luxembourg "*trop etroit*,"—too confined, resolved that henceforth the consuls should reside in the Tuileries, the ancient palace of the kings of France, disguised under the title of the Government Palace. After many petty and seemingly very unnecessary devices, which strongly remind one of the character given of Swift, who, it is said, could not take a cup of tea without a stratagem, this change of domicile was effected. Some days after the installation, which took place on the 30th Pluviose (19th February, 1800), accompanied with all the splendour of military pomp, and consequently excluding female agency, Josephine in turn made her first essay in the grand observances of empire. The occasion, therefore, seems to demand especial notice.

The suite selected for the wife of the First Consul, which continued to be occupied also by the empress, was part of the former royal apartments on the ground floor, fronting the gardens. This suite consisted of two saloons, with private apartments. By eight in the evening alluded to the spacious drawing-rooms of Madame Bonaparte were crowded with a most brilliant assembly, and so numerous, that for the circulation of air it became necessary to throw open the folding-doors leading to her own dressing-room. The company consisted of the foreign am

bassadors, to the number of twelve, then resident a the consular court (for so it might already have been named), and of the most distinguished among the native ornament and worth of the gay metropolis. For the brilliant talents, heroic bearing, or marked character of many present, and even in the minor circumstances of richness and elegance of effect, this first reunion was perhaps never surpassed in the imperial halls of the Tuileries. To a ceremonious eye, indeed, there might probably have appeared a lack of two things,—crowned heads, and their necessary accompaniment, etiquette. "*Cela viendra*," said Napoleon; "these things will come with time," —and he said truly; for the *heads* were there, and looked quite as respectable as afterward when they had got their *crowns;* while, in the estimation of most people, the complaint of the old courtier, "It may be a great power, but it is not a court," will hardly imply defect. It is to be remembered, too, —a circumstance which at the time excited a pleasing surprise—that France had just emerged from a ten years' civil strife, wherein her treasure had been wasted and the blood of her noblest shed. Yet here was all the splendour, and perhaps more than the usual talents which surround a long-established throne. The baseness of the multitude had inflicted the evil; the energy of one man had already so far effected a restoration. Madame Bonaparte was announced, and entered, conducted by M. de Talleyrand, then minister for foreign affairs. In a scene where diamond and star, cordon and plume, in more than usual profusion thus caught radiance and shade from

Lights that shone o'er fair women and brave men,

expectancy must have been high on the first appearance of her who was to fill the prime station. A momentary feeling of disappointment might have crossed for an instant those minds who had looked

for magnificence and state. Josephine was attired with the utmost simplicity in a robe of white muslin; her hair, without decoration of any kind, and merely retained by a plain comb *d'ecaille*, fell in tresses upon her neck, in the most becoming negligence; a collar of pearls, an unobtrusive ornament, but of great value, harmonized with and completed this unpretending costume. We have the evidence of an eyewitness, that a spontaneous murmur of admiration followed Josephine's entrance, such being the grace and dignity of her deportment, that with all this absence of the external attributes of rank, a stranger would at once have fixed upon the principal personage in the splendid circle. Always accompanied as she had entered, Madame Bonaparte made the tour of the apartments, the members of the foreign diplomacy being first introduced in succession by the minister. When the introductions had nearly concluded, the First Consul entered, but without being announced, dressed in a plain chasseur uniform, with a sash of tri-coloured silk. In this simplicity both good taste and sound policy concurred. The occasion was not a levee; the first magistrate and his wife merely received the congratulations of their fellow-citizens of a free republic.

At this period Josephine had completed by some months the thirty-sixth, though, by her own account, she was only so far advanced in the thirty-third year of her age, and she might have passed for even younger than this. At a time of life when, as respects the charms of mind and conversation, woman is most fascinating, she thus still enjoyed those personal advantages which are thought to belong exclusively to more youthful years. The surpassing elegance and taste displayed in the mysteries of her toilet were doubtless not without their influence in prolonging the empire of beauty; but nature had been originally bountiful in no common degree.

Josephine was rather above than below the middle

size, hers being exactly that perfection of stature which is neither too tall for the delicacy of feminine proportion, nor so diminutive as to detract from dignity. Her person, in its individual forms, exhibited faultless symmetry; and the whole frame, animated by lightness and elasticity of movement, seemed like something aerial in its perfectly graceful carriage. This harmonious ease of action contributed yet more to the dignified, though still youthful air so remarkable in Josephine's appearance. Her features were small and finely modelled, the curves tending rather to fulness, and the profile inclining to Grecian, but without any statuelike coldness of outline. The habitual character of her countenance was a placid sweetness, within whose influence there were few who would not have felt interested in a being so gentle. Perhaps the first impression might have left a feeling that there wanted energy; but this could have been for an instant only, for the real charm of this mild countenance resided in its power of varied expression, changing with each vicissitude of thought and sentiment. "Never," says a very honest admirer, "did any woman better justify the saying, 'The eyes are the mirror of the soul.'" Josephine's were of a deep blue, clear and brilliant, even imposing in their expression, when turned fully upon any one; but in her usual manner they lay half-concealed beneath their long and silky eyelashes. She had a habit of looking thus with a mild subdued glance upon those she loved, throwing into her regard such winning tenderness as might not easily be resisted, and, even in his darkest moods, Napoleon confessed its tranquillizing power. Realizing exactly the fine description of the old poet, Josephine's

Long hair was glossy chestnut brown,

whose sunny richness harmonized delightfully with a clear and transparent complexion, and neck of almost dazzling whiteness. Her eyebrows were a

shade darker, arching regularly, and pencilled with extreme delicacy. The perfect modulation of her voice has already been mentioned; it constituted one of her most pleasing attractions, and rendered her conversation, though neither sparkling with wit nor remarkable for strength, but flowing on in easy elegance and perfect good-nature, the most captivating that can easily be conceived. On the whole, Josephine, perhaps, might not exactly have pretensions to be what is termed a fine woman, but hers was that style of beauty which awakens in the heart a far deeper sentiment than mere admiration.

Whatever might have been the attractions of a residence in the ancient palace of the French kings, Malmaison had still charms which drew both the consul and his wife periodically to its retreats. These "holydays"—*jours de congé*, as Napoleon used to call them—were at first each *decadi*, or tenth day; but afterward, when, last of all its absurdities, the calendar of the republic was abolished, they came weekly, and were generally continued from Saturday till Monday evening. Nothing could be more delightful to Josephine than to behold Bonaparte here, throwing aside all care and all artificial character, where every one around him, and she more than any, enjoyed this "unburdening from state." And it might go far to reconcile us to an humble lot to reflect on the man who swayed the destinies of France—who had filled up the measure of his ambition—saying with a sigh, as he left for a palace this brief leisure in a simple villa,—"*Il faut aller reprendre le collier de misère*"—Now must I resume the yoke of misery.

This bondage had, perhaps, about this time become the more galling from his sense of security being shaken, even in this asylum. Either the agents of his own police or the real machinations of enemies rendered Malmaison for the first few months of the consulate a distrusted, if not a dangerous abode.

The former have usually been blamed, and, of course, the alleged plots treated as absurdities. There appears good reason for believing, however, that the conspiracies against the life or liberty of the First Consul were real, and at all events he incurred danger. At the commencement of the consulate operations and improvements were ordered at Malmaison. Among the people employed in the apartments of her husband, Josephine particularly remarked some who seemed to be working like the rest, but had not the appearance of workmen in other respects. Fearing to create an unnecessary alarm, or to bring, perhaps, innocent men into trouble, she contented herself with giving confidential orders to keep the strictest watch. The alterations were completed, and the suspicious characters vanished. Just as the consul was about to reoccupy the apartments, upon their being examined, nothing occurred to excite suspicion save a snuff-box placed on the writing-table, at which most likely he would immediately have sat down. The box, too, could not be distinguished from those he usually carried, and it was supposed had been left there by his valet. To make all sure, however, for distrust had been awakened, the box was removed, and its contents examined. The snuff had been poisoned! Among other means of security, the porter at Malmaison had trained a number of dogs of enormous size, and among them two very fine Newfoundlanders, to aid him in his guardianship. This precaution originated in reports, that besides conspirators disguised as workmen in the interior, there were others in the uniform of the consular guard, who, mixing with the escort at Malmaison, were to assassinate Bonaparte. All strangers—for many of the workmen remained during the night—had strict injunctions not to venture abroad after dark. One evening, a workman, conceiving that as the dogs were quite peaceable within doors they would be so without, took it into his head that he would have a

walk; and, taking one of his Newfoundland friends along with him, both proceeded very amicably till they had just crossed the threshold, when the dog sprang upon and nearly throttled the man before he could be rescued. Madame Bonaparte, on learning the consequences of this imprudence, ordered the greatest care to be taken of the patient, and on his recovery presented him with a very considerable gratuity.

Several attempts were said to have been made about the same time to intercept the First Consul on his passage between Paris and Malmaison. The road suited with deeds of violence. It passed through a district then little frequented, and was beset with lurking-places, especially the quarries of Nanterre, which were accordingly scrutinized very carefully by the servants of his private establishment on all occasions when the consul was expected; and, finally, some of the openings nearest the road were filled up. These precautions seem to have been principally, if not entirely, ordered by Josephine. Accompanied by Hortense, she very frequently preceded her husband on these short journeys, and always sent forward a few faithful domestics with directions to survey the road. These commands appear to have been most punctually obeyed; for so much were both beloved by their dependants, that those who happened not to be on service on these particular days joined themselves with the rest, that they might assist in watching over the safety of the consul, and performing an acceptable duty to their mistress. Napoleon expressed himself satisfied with this zeal, but does not seem to have entertained any alarm in his own person. Often, indeed, on arriving, he amused himself by relating very gravely to Josephine the narrow escapes which he had made on the way,—how he had met several very sinister visages appearing and disappearing; that one villanous-looking fellow had had the audacity to take aim,

&c., &c.; and when he observed her to be very much frightened, he would burst out a-laughing, call her "*Ma grosse bête*," and, resuming a serious, and even stern expression, conclude by saying, with a compressed action of the mouth, "*They dare not!*"

In improving, altering, building, and calculating his rents, Bonaparte passed his leisure at Malmaison during the spring of 1800. Eugene, Hortense, and other intimate friends completed these family parties, which, however, were hardly as yet either so delightfully unpretending in the morning or so splendid in the evening as they afterward became under the animating influence of the excellent Josephine. Meanwhile, rougher work was at hand; and Napoleon set out for the Alps to lead

> The armed files that, night and day, were seen
> Winding from cliff to cliff, in loose array,
> To conquer at MARENGO.

To describe this brief and wonderful campaign forms no part of our present design. "*Allons, ma bonne!*"—the consul had said on departing,—"Courage, my good Josephine! I shall not forget thee, nor will my absence be long." To both promises he was faithful, unless we reckon as a breach of the first certain infidelities, which, however, though it be impossible that profligacy should not gradually weaken, and at last undermine sentiment, produced, at the time, no real estrangement of affection for Josephine. On the second promise there could be no doubt: Bonaparte left Malmaison on the 4th, and Paris on the 7th of May—on the night of the 2d of July he slept in the Tuileries. In that brief space, he had hurled back or disorganized the armies which, on his accession to the consulate, had beset France, wrested Italy from the Austrians, and thus laid deep the foundations of his own future empire. This active interval had been passed by Josephine chiefly at Malmaison. We may judge of the pleasure with

which she there superintended the improvements that were to welcome "her Cid—her Achilles." She now also began those collections of rare animals to which the power or conquests of her husband, and not unfrequently a grateful remembrance of her own kindness, brought accessions from the distant parts of the globe. Often, too, she rode out on horseback, accompanied by her daughter. On one of these occasions, the latter had nearly been the victim of a serious accident. The two ladies had reached the court, and were about to alight, when Hortense's steed, taking fright, turned sharp round, and ran off full speed. She was an excellent rider, but fearing to alarm her mother, and being light and agile, she attempted to throw herself from the saddle, not recollecting that the folds of her riding habit were confined at the bottom by a strap, which impeded her descent. She was dragged for some space with her head on the ground. Fortunately, she had been able to turn her frightened courser a little from the avenue upon the lawn, and being almost immediately rescued from her perilous situation, sustained no injury beyond some scratches, and was the first to laugh at her mishap. One of Josephine's favourite amusements was to play at billiards in the evening. To this, however, she resorted only when very late; for at this time she delighted in sitting up till morning, and the billiard-table served both to dissipate and conceal her anxiety. This beautiful game she played with greater grace than skill, though more than a match for Napoleon. In the country, as she often sat out all the members of her family, she would frequently take a cue with some one of her favourite domestics, and thus, without affectation, "while away an hour."

But during this brilliant campaign, as in the preceding one, Josephine's absorbing enjoyment was to read the letters from Italy. These, in the handwriting of the consul, or dictated to his secretary

Bourrienne, arrived almost daily at Malmaison. One of the first refers to a little incident, which shows how perfectly devoid of all state were the domestic arrangements of the consular establishment: Bonaparte had conceived a good opinion of Constant; the same who, for the next fifteen years, served him so faithfully in the capacity of personal attendant. Madame Bonaparte, to whose service the young man had been attached, willingly agreed to this exchange, but in the hurry of departure, Constant had been forgotten. "I was in despair," says this very respectable person, "and went in tears to report my misfortune to my excellent mistress, who had the goodness to endeavour to console me, by saying, 'Well, my good Constant, all is not lost; you shall remain with me, and hunt in the park to amuse yourself, and perhaps in the end the First Consul will remember his promise.'" So it proved, for in a day or two arrived a letter from Bourrienne, directing, among other matters, that Constant should join the First Consul in all haste. "So, my friend," said Madame Bonaparte, seeing the joy which this intimation gave, "you are then very happy in the thought of leaving me."—"No! no! my lady; but it is not leaving your service to wait upon the First Consul."—"True, my good Constant; go, and be sure to take the greatest care of *him*."

After the triumphant return from Marengo, the excursions to Malmaison were still more frequent, the parties, if possible, still more happy, and the residences often prolonged for several days at a time. The armistice concluded on the 15th June, and the negotiations for peace continuing up to the following November, left the First Consul full leisure to enjoy, and inspired others with confidence to participate in, this tranquillity. Madame Bonaparte received her visiters with the elegance and grace that marked all her actions, but with a simplicity which placed every one perfectly at his ease, being

equally removed from the unpolished rudeness of the republic, and the luxurious state of the empire. Besides the most eminent officers of the government and army, and the members of the Bonaparte family who were familiarly present, the usual visiters included all those most distinguished for their birth and talents, as well the olden names of the monarchy as the new men of the revolution.

The domestic felicity of the First Consul when at Malmaison seemed to be complete. He had around him only attached relatives or the most devoted servants, and his amusements were of the simplest kind. Bourrienne has described their family theatricals,—a relaxation which was at once conducted with the greatest decorum, and a source of much innocent enjoyment both to Bonaparte and to Josephine. Proud of the talents of her children, and gratified by their power to contribute to his entertainment for whose happiness she wished only to live, among the distinguished performers in the *Malmaison company*, she had the satisfaction to see Eugene, Hortense, and her two favourite protegées, the sisters Auguié, the elder of whom afterward became the wife of Marshal Ney. Another amusement may be described as still more peculiarly characteristic. This was the game of "*prisoners*," so well known among schoolboys, when two parties run against each other, seizing as captives such of their unfortunate opponents as happen to be caught within certain limits round the respective stations. The members of the ordinary circle at Malmaison were all young, active, and every one inclined to enjoy life *sans façon*, while their chief probably delighted in a sport which in some measure brought back an image of the grand game of war. Usually after dinner the party was arranged. Bonaparte and Josephine, Eugene, Hortense, Caroline Bonaparte, Rapp, Lauriston, Duroc, Isabey, with Bourrienne, and a few other confidential retainers, divided into two camps,

as they were termed; and, when nothing pressed, the sport often continued for hours. The best runners were Eugene and his sister; but Bonaparte, in the selection of partisans, always chose Josephine, never suffering her to be in any camp but his own. When by chance she happened to be taken prisoner, he always seemed uneasy till she was released, making all exertions for that purpose, though a bad runner himself, often coming down in mid career with a heavy fall on the grass. Up again, however, he started, but usually so convulsed with laughter that he could not possibly move, and the affair generally ended in his captivity. When placed in durance, or when Josephine had been taken, he kept constantly calling out to his party, "A rescue! a rescue!" clapping his hands, shouting to encourage the runners, and, in short, exhibiting all the ardour of a boy at play. When we find the conqueror at Marengo, the restorer of France, thus yielding to the kindly promptings of harmless mirth in the bosom of his family, we almost forget his real character.

It must not be supposed, however, though, for the sake of displaying character, we insist on these minute details, that Josephine neglected the higher duties of her station. From the time she possessed the power, her endeavours to relieve the misfortunes of those unhappy men whom the crimes or violence of revolution had driven from their homes were unceasing. At every period, both of the consulate and empire, a very considerable portion of her income was allotted to the relief of those emigrants who either would not or could not return. When she is accused of thoughtless profusion, it would be well to remember her expenditure here. The commencement of Bonaparte's legislative career had been distinguished by an act as politic as it was just, —the recall of the emigrants; but there were many exceptions from the general clause, and cases

wherein its application was impeded by particular objections. To smooth these difficulties, Madame Bonaparte's influence and exertions were seldom denied, and rarely unsuccessful. "Josephine," as her husband observed, "will not take a refusal; but it must be confessed, she rarely undertakes a case which has not propriety at least on its side." These applications were chiefly in favour of the members of the exiled aristocracy, because, perhaps, ancient predilections inclined that way, but still more because the pressure of the former laws of expatriation, and the suspicions of present distrust, fell heaviest upon that order. Even when they had been restored to their country, Josephine's care of these objects of her benevolence continued active; for, in most instances, they returned to behold the halls of their fathers in the possession of strangers. This reminds us of an incident which shows how intimately Josephine was acquainted with the human heart, and by what gentle means she could draw its kindly feelings into action. The noble family of Decrest had owed their return to her interest: she continued to befriend them; for the marquis had lost all, though, as Fouché was forced to say, "I will instantly erase his name from the list; for while others have been but too well known, he cannot even show a certificate of having been *abroad*." The first era of the republic following the consulate, which the reader will remember was the 23d of September, and the only one of the republican festivals allowed to remain, was celebrated in a very magnificent manner. In the evening a grand fire-work was played off on the Seine. A rocket misdirected struck Decrest, a nephew of the marquis, and a young officer of great promise. His father, inconsolable for the death of an only son, who, to add to his grief, had been on the eve of marriage with the daughter of an ancient friend, remained in a state of the most gloomy despair, regardless of every

thing. On the morrow after the fatal catastrophe, Madame Montesson, the widow of the Duke d'Orleans, father of his present majesty Louis Philippe, and grand-aunt of the young man who had been killed, sent for her disconsolate relatives to her house. The elder Decrest showed himself alike insensible to every thing,—her tears, admonitions, and caresses were suffered without notice and without return. During this interview, when all feared for the reason or the life of the unhappy parent, Madame Bonaparte entered. She had been informed of the accident, and at a glance discovered the melancholy state of things. Without uttering a word, where she perceived ordinary consolation to be useless, Josephine took the eldest daughter by the hand, raised the youngest, a child of fifteen months, in her arms, and knelt thus before the despairing mourner. At first he seemed surprised, then moved, and finally bursting into tears, saw he was yet a father, and blessed alternately his children and his preserver. "I witnessed," says an amiable lady, "this scene, which I shall never forget; the wife of the First Consul expressed, in language which I will not, because I cannot, imitate, all that tenderness which the maternal bosom alone knows: she was the very image of a ministering angel, for the touching charms of her voice and look pertained more to heaven than to earth."

The close of the year 1800 was marked by one of the most atrocious attempts occurring in history,—the conspiracy of the *infernal machine*. The details of this execrable affair, so far as concerns our present subject, are interesting. On the 3d Nivose, year 9 (21st December, 1800), a splendid representation was to be given, by order, at the opera; the First Consul having previously announced that he would be present with the members of his family. This probably suggested the plot, and certainly afforded time for maturing it. On the day in question Bona-

parte dined with his wife, Hortense, and Generals Rapp, Lauriston, Lannes, and Berthier. About seven o'clock, the three last named entered the carriage, and drove off with the First Consul. On arriving near the middle of the street St. Nicaise, a narrow lane leading from the Tuileries, the piquet of the escort, which immediately preceded, found the way blocked up by a cart. This was drawn aside, and the coachman, impatient at the delay, having been ordered to drive fast, pushed forward at full speed. About two or three seconds after the consular carriage had passed a violent explosion followed, by which twenty persons were killed, more than sixty wounded, and one or two of the adjacent houses thrown down. Of the sufferers only a few of the slightly wounded belonged to the retinue of the First Consul; the others were passengers, but, had there been a carriage behind, it must have been blown to atoms. The merest chance appears to have saved Josephine from this horrid fate, for as she was always very punctual, knowing her husband's impatience of being detained, her carriage would in all probability have followed close in the rear. General Rapp, as we have seen, remained to accompany the ladies; Madame Bonaparte's shawl being presented to her, the general began in a gay mode to remark on the pattern and colour, urging another more becoming choice. Josephine, in a similar tone of pleasantry, called the general a very bold man in venturing to criticise her toilet, adding, "In return I shall take an opportunity of giving you a lesson how to attack a redoubt; meanwhile, since you insist," addressing one of her attendants, "bring me the general's favourite," indicating the shawl which Rapp had mentioned. In this way a delay of a few minutes ensued, and the carriage, containing Madame Bonaparte, Hortense, and Madame Murat, had just passed from the square of the Carrousel when the explosion took place. The glasses, even at that distance, were

shattered to pieces. Hortense was slightly cut in the face by a fragment, and Madame Caroline, then near her time of the present Prince Achilles Murat, was seized with so violent a nervous affection that she could not proceed. Josephine, all pale and trembling, arrived at the opera, where her appearance of extreme apprehension contrasted strongly with the perfect calmness of the consul. The latter remained, however, but a short time; and, on returning to the Tuileries, as is well known, broke out into a violent invective against Fouché for his ignorance, and the Jacobins for their contrivance of the plot. The minister of police maintained that the royalists were the conspirators, an assertion which, unhappily for the honour of that party, subsequent events confirmed. The following letter, written by Josephine to Fouché, as minister of police, shows, that no sooner had her fears for the safety of those she loved ceased, than pity for the guilty, and a desire to soften the consequences, took possession of her heart:—

"Citizen Minister,—While I yet tremble at the frightful event which has just occurred, I am disquieted and distressed, through fear of the punishment necessarily to be inflicted on the guilty, who belong, it is said, to families with whom I once lived in habits of intercourse. I shall be solicited by mothers, sisters, and disconsolate wives; and my heart will be broken, through my inability to obtain all the mercy for which I would plead.

"I know that the clemency of the First Consul is great, his attachment to me extreme; but the crime is too dreadful that terrible examples should not be necessary. The chief of the government has not been alone exposed; and it is that which will render him severe,—inflexible. I conjure you, therefore, citizen minister, to do all that lies in your power to prevent inquiries being pushed too far. Do not de-

bect all those persons who may have been accomplices in these odious transactions. Let not France, so long overwhelmed in consternation by public executions, groan anew beneath such inflictions. It is ever better to endeavour to sooth the public mind, than to exasperate men by fresh terrors. In short, when the ringleaders in this abominable attempt shall have been secured, let severity give place to pity for inferior agents, seduced, as they may have been, by dangerous falsehoods, or exaggerated opinions.

"When just invested with supreme power, the First Consul, as seems to me, ought rather to gain hearts than be exhibited as ruling slaves. Soften by your counsels whatever may be too violent in his just resentment. Punish—alas! that you must certainly do—but pardon still more. Be also the support of those unfortunate men who, by frank avowal, or repentance, shall expiate a portion of their crime.

"Having myself narrowly escaped perishing in the Revolution, you must regard as quite natural my interference in behalf of those who can be saved without involving in new danger the life of my husband, precious to me and to France. On this account, do, I entreat you, make a wide distinction between the authors of the crime, and those who, through weakness or fear, have consented to take a part therein. As a woman, a wife, and a mother, I must feel the heartrendings of those that will apply to me. Act, citizen minister, in such a manner, that the number of these may be lessened. This will spare me much grief. Never will I turn away from the supplications of misfortune; but, in the present instance, you can do infinitely more than I, and will, on this account, excuse my importunity. Rely on my gratitude and esteem."

Thus nobly terminated, in the cause of humanity

Josephine's connexion with an event which had been fraught with so much danger and sorrow to herself, but which, in its issue, tended greatly to the establishment of despotic power in France.

The next occurrence of importance in the domestic life of Josephine was the marriage of her daughter with Louis Bonaparte. This union followed close upon the transactions now related, and under sentiments of mutual estrangement in the principal parties, which augured ill for their future happiness. To do justice, however, it must be recollected, that the affections of Mademoiselle Beauharnais were previously engaged, and to one whom Bonaparte himself at first approved, while the sentiments of Louis seem hardly to have been understood. At the date of their marriage (January 7, 1802), Hortense was about eighteen and Louis twenty-four; a long life was thus before them, for happiness or for wretchedness; yet each possessed recommendations, both of person and disposition, well adapted, with proper management—and Josephine certainly calculated upon that—to secure their mutual felicity. The chief cause of misunderstanding in a union thus externally not ill assorted is attributed to previous attachments in both instances. Who the lady was that should have been the future queen of Holland is still a mystery; but the inclination of Hortense for the Grand Marshal Duroc, and even Bonaparte's approval of their correspondence, are well known.* Duroc was, at this time, about thirty years of age; cold and reserved, but ambitious, he seems to have regarded a union with Mademoiselle de Beauharnais, by removing him from personal attendance on the First Consul, as likely rather to impede than forward his interests. In the end, when crowns and principalities confirmed every alliance with members of the imperial family, he could not but see, and

* See translation of Bourrienne, vol. ii. p. 169–172. Second Edition. *Constable's Miscellany.*

probably regretted, his error. In all probability, too, Madame Bonaparte, resolved on accomplishing a marriage between Hortense and Louis, might have used her influence with Duroc to forego his pretensions. Over this transaction, however, in all its aspects, contradiction and mystery hang. At St. Helena, Napoleon has asserted that the match was one of affection between his brother and daughter-in-law, while he has maintained the most perfect silence on the predilection of the latter for his own favourite aid-de-camp, as well as the countenance he had himself given to their correspondence down to the 4th of January, 1802. Now, so far from the union having been the wish of the parties, the very opposite appeared, from the first, evident to all Paris. "Madame Montesson"—thus writes one friendly to Josephine—"gave the first ball which took place on the marriage of Louis Bonaparte with Hortense de Beauharnais. Seven hundred invitations were issued. There was yet no *imperial dynasty*; but, though a girl, I could remark the extreme eagerness, the base flattery, of all ranks, in paying court to this family, whose fortune had already commenced in a way to baffle all calculation as to where its ambition and success would terminate. The ambassadors were present at this fête, which was truly magnificent. All respired pleasure; every countenance wore the expression of joy, except that of the newly married bride, whose profound sadness contrasted too visibly with the happiness which it was the etiquette to suppose she enjoyed. Covered with diamonds and flowers, she appeared insensible to every thing save regret. From that day, sorrow might easily have been augured, from a marriage where the contracting parties were so little agreeable to each other." Again, the correspondence between Duroc and Hortense had been so long and so openly conducted, as to be known, not only to Bourrienne, but to several other members of the consular

household. The sudden desertion, by the former, of engagements, which these circumstances certainly imply, without some secret and cogent reason, is hardly to be reconciled with his highly honourable character. The motive also alleged for Josephine's urging this unfortunate match, namely, desire to have one supporter in the family of her husband, where all else were hostile, though plausible, is hardly satisfactory; for the arrangement seems inadequate to the accomplishment of the object. Hortense could, at most, have influence only with her husband, who does not appear to have joined in any of the machinations of his brothers; the affection of these she could scarcely be expected to conciliate, and they would take care effectually to conceal from her whatever might be dangerous to her mother. Whence, then, all this contradiction and mysteriousness? and why should so much art have been employed to render two beings unhappy, by a union, for which the motives appear to have been so insufficient? Surely we are not thence to infer the truth of reports damnatory of Napoleon's honourable affection for his daughter-in-law. But is not the inference probable, that a principal, though concealed, motive in these transactions was, by such a union, to give the lie for ever to these imputations? Certain it is, that Josephine knew of these allegations, so injurious to her honour and her peace. From the following letter, indeed, written long afterward, it not only appears that she was well aware of them, but that Hortense, in one to which this is the answer, had accused her mother of being opposed to the separation from Louis, as giving credit to the reports of having a rival in her daughter.

*Josephine to Hortense.*

"You have ill understood me, my child; there is nothing equivocal in my words, as there cannot exist

an uncandid sentiment in my heart. How could you conceive that I participate in some ridiculous, or, perhaps, malicious opinions? No! you do not think that I believe you to be my rival. We, indeed, both reign in the same bosom, though by very different, yet equally sacred rights; and they who, in the affection which my husband manifests for you, have pretended to discover other sentiments than those of a parent and a friend, know not *his* soul. His is a mind too elevated above the vulgar ever to be accessible to the passions. That of glory, if you will, engrosses him too entirely for our repose; but, at least, glory inspires nothing vile. Such, as touching him, is my profession of faith. I make the confession to you in all sincerity, in order to allay your inquietudes. When I recommended to you to love, or, at least, not to repulse Louis, I spoke to you in my character of an experienced wife, an attentive mother, and tender friend, and in this threefold relation do I now embrace you."

There is something extremely sad in reflecting on the misery thus entailed upon individuals who, in the world's estimation, were able to command so large a share of happiness. Duroc afterward married Signora Hervas d'Almenara, daughter of the banker to the court of Spain, whose immense fortune afforded but slight compensation for a disagreeable person, and worse temper. But Duroc deserved his fate, which, besides, was his own choice. Not so Hortense, whose condition merits commiseration. With habits and dispositions to confer and enjoy happiness, hers had been a life of sorrow and deprivation from childhood almost up to the hour in which existence, in its spring, was thus overcast. The narrow circumstances of her childhood—the death of her father on a scaffold—the dreary season which intervened before her mother's second marriage—had left her little enjoyment, except the

years passed at St. Germains with Madame Campan. Now that she had grown into a beautiful and accomplished woman, with a heart peculiarly formed to love and be beloved, these very affections were crushed for ever at the moment when every thing had seemed to smile on her fortunes. The subsequent events of her life, the mutual estrangement of her and her husband's affections, the death of their favourite son, the consequences of that event, her mother's divorce, her own ill health, and, finally, the ruin of that very greatness to which she had been sacrificed, all conspire to render hers one of the most melancholy instances of the insufficiency of grandeur to happiness. Though we cannot altogether acquit Josephine of having, in some degree, contributed to her daughter's misery, at least it appears that she considered the character of Louis, and even his sentiments towards Hortense, as calculated to ensure the happiness of their union. On this subject, the following letter, written some time before the separation, proves, as already stated, that there existed any thing but indifference on the part of Louis:—

*To Queen Hortense.*

"What I learned eight days ago gave me the greatest pain; what I observe to-day confirms and augments my sorrow. Why show to Louis this repugnance? Instead of rendering him more ungracious still by caprice, by inequality of character, why do you not rather make efforts to surmount your indifference? But, you will say, he is not amiable! All that is relative. If not in your eyes, he may appear so to others; and all women do not view him through the medium of dislike. As for myself, who am here altogether disinterested, I imagine I behold him as he is,—more *loving*, doubtless, than *lovable*; but this is a great and rare quality: generous, beneficent,

feeling, and, above all, an excellent father—if you so willed, he would prove a good husband! His melancholy, his love of study and retirement, injure him in your estimation. For these, I ask you, is he to blame? Is he obliged to conform his nature to circumstances? Who could have predicted to him his fortune? But, according to you, he has not even the courage to bear that fortune! This I believe to be an error; but he certainly wants the strength. With his ascetic inclinations, his invincible desire of retirement and study, he finds himself misplaced in the elevated rank to which he has attained. You desire that he should imitate his brother: give him first of all the same temperament. You have not failed to remark, that almost our entire existence depends upon our health, and that upon our digestion. Let poor Louis digest better, and you would find him more amiable. But such as he is, that can be no reason for abandoning him, or making him feel the unbecoming sentiment with which he inspires you. Do you, whom I have seen so kind, continue to be so at the moment when it is precisely more than ever necessary. Take pity on a man who has to lament that he possesses what would constitute another's happiness, and, before condemning him, think of others who, like him, have groaned beneath the burden of their greatness, and bathed with their tears that diadem which they believed had never been destined for their brow."

This view was perfectly correct. Louis Bonaparte, under a cold exterior, concealed a soul of intense feeling. Ordinary affections were not sufficient; he desired to engross every sentiment of love. His wife's purest attachments, her tenderness for her mother and her brother, appeared to him so much withheld from her husband. He was jealous of every thing which might distract a thought from himself. He almost had forbidden her music and

painting, accomplishments which Hortense cultivated most successfully, thinking even these innocent occupations criminal, in the devotion with which they were pursued. This morbid sensibility, rather than want of affection, was the cause of their mutual unhappiness. Had her daughter followed Josephine's excellent advice—had she studied and endeavoured to sooth the dispositions of Louis—the fate of both might have been very different. Hortense was eminently qualified to have succeeded here. She was a most agreeable woman, in manners, talents, accomplishments, and all the graces of an amiable character. She was not exactly beautiful; for the conformation of her mouth and her teeth, which rather projected, took away from the regularity of a countenance otherwise very pleasing all its sweetness and benignity of expression. Her eyes, like her mother's, were blue, her complexion clear, and her hair of a charming blond. In stature, she did not exceed the middle size; but her person was beautifully formed. Louis, of all his brothers, most resembled Napoleon, and, had he enjoyed good health, he would have been much handsomer.

The first months of the year 1802 were passed very agreeably by Josephine, in accompanying the First Consul in various excursions, one of her supreme delights, or chiefly in her beloved retirement at Malmaison. The journey to Lyons, and the meeting of Italian deputies, immediately followed the hopeless nuptials of her daughter; and as the honour of president of the Cisalpine Republic, then conferred upon Napoleon, might be considered a preliminary step to a higher name, the entertainments at this second capital of France were of almost royal magnificence. Every tongue was eloquent in praise of Josephine's demeanour in these fêtes, where she took care always to appear attended by the chief magistrates, gaining all hearts

by her grace and affability. During a succeeding residence of some weeks at Malmaison, Josephine happened to be in the cabinet one morning when an individual was introduced whose coat had once been newer, a circumstance sufficient of itself to give the wearer an air of embarrassment, independently of an address naturally none of the easiest. The person at length took courage to introduce himself as the Professor at Brienne, who had had the signal honour to teach the First Consul writing.—"And a proper penman you made of me!" exclaimed the latter, in great apparent wrath; "ask my wife there." The poor man was in great distress. Josephine laughed, and said something about the letters being always delightful. Bonaparte laughed too, and finished by giving the writing-master a small pension for life. All his surviving instructers at Brienne were in fact thus remembered. This gentleman, however, together with the Latin master, had certainly no reason to be proud of their pupil. Napoleon's letters were not only miserably written, as everybody knows, and sometimes not very correctly spelled, but were, moreover, bedaubed all over with large blotches; for he had a practice of dipping his pen into the inkholder at every word, and throwing the superfluous liquid on his paper. So much was this the case, that a lady attached to the imperial household, seeing Josephine, as she stood behind her chair, often reading letters announced as coming from the emperor, and being short-sighted, relates, that for a long while she conceived the correspondence to consist chiefly of sketches and maps in miniature, and got very heartily laughed at upon inquiring concerning these supposed specimens in geography and the fine arts.

A tour of fifteen days through Normandy and the northern provinces followed soon after. This part of France Bonaparte had not visited since some time before setting out for Egypt, and Josephine

not since she had been there with her first husband. Each had food for reflection on the change of their respective conditions; but hope pointed onwards, for everywhere, throughout this powerful department of the ancient monarchy, the enthusiasm which greeted the approach of the First Consul clearly showed how easy, so far as the people were concerned, would be the re-edification of the throne. The fact, indeed, is undoubted, that the expression of public sentiment which he then witnessed contributed much to strengthen, if not to accelerate, his resolution of assuming, in his own person, the forms of royalty. The ancient city of Evreux, afterward more noted in the less happy period of Josephine's life, was forward, upon this occasion, to manifest its attachment. A local functionary, of long standing and considerable rank, had undertaken to do the honours of the place, and rendered himself highly agreeable to Madame Bonaparte. Among other subjects, she expressed her interest by inquiring about his family—how many children he had. "*Cin-z-enfans*," replied the prefect, in the provincial accent—meaning to have said *cinq enfans* (five children).—"*Sixteen children!*" repeated the astonished inquirer, misled by sound; "ah! mon Dieu! what a regiment—*seize enfans!*"—"Yes, madam," reiterated the functionary, "*cin-z-enfans;*" surprised, in his turn, how it should appear strange that an honest man had five children. One of his colleagues, remarking the mutual mistake, good-naturedly thought of coming to the relief of both parties; and, after setting to rights the affair of numbers, added, with the greatest simplicity and earnestness, "Deign, madam, to excuse my friend's pronunciation; the Revolution interrupted the course of his studies." The man was then above sixty. Madame Bonaparte received with the greatest gravity an explanation which would have made the worthy magistrate a schoolboy at rather more than fifty

On returning from his northern tour, the First Consul took up his country residence in the palace of St. Cloud; at the same time, a decree of his colleagues granted to Josephine "four ladies to assist her in doing the honours of the palace," and soon after were added four prefects—germs these of the future court. This establishment in a second royal palace had scarcely taken place a few days, when the magnificent pile, now repaired and refurnished at an immense expense, had nearly been reduced to ashes by a nocturnal conflagration. The fire originated in the soldiers of the guard having overcharged one of the stoves in the vestibule, the flues of which, communicating with one of the saloons, set the furniture on flames. The commanding officer, perceiving the smoke issuing from the windows, called the concierge, and both ran in all haste to awake General Duroc. The general, commanding the most perfect silence, organized a chain of soldiers from the nearest piece of water to the palace; and, getting first into the reservoir himself, to encourage others, the fire was at length extinguished, but not till after two or three hours' incessant labour. The First Consul expressed his great satisfaction with Duroc's proceedings, especially in not awakening any of the inmates; but Josephine's surprise may be conceived, on entering, next morning, her splendid drawing-room—the admiration of all Paris—and finding it a scene of such utter ruin.

The spring of the same year beheld various important steps towards the establishment of monarchy. The consulship for life—the institution of the legion of honour—the re-establishment of the public ordinances of religion—and the proceedings of government, abolished the last lingering forms of the republic. In all these changes, Josephine, of course, had little to do. In the restoration of religious worship she, indeed, took the warmest interest; but we dare hardly affirm that this con-

cern arose from a sense of religion itself—beyond the mere remembrance of its orderly respectabilities. There then existed among the upper ranks in France little of the feeling at all; in the consular court itself, most were directly opposed; and only throughout the middle class did any really religious sentiment remain. But Josephine viewed the matter, though not in its inward and intrinsic principles, at least in all its charities; she saw that the measure would recall many to their native land; be the means of reuniting a priesthood whose members were dispersed throughout Europe, all in a condition of more or less suffering; and would further tend to peace, confidence, and unanimity at home. Bonaparte himself viewed the whole as an affair not merely political, but as one of personal politics. The Catholic religion has ever been the firmest support of absolute power; and, *therefore*, he now desired its re-establishment in France. How he persuaded others appears from the following scene, which took place on the morning of the first celebration of mass in Notre Dame. Bonaparte had risen early, and nearly finished dressing, when his brother Joseph and his colleague Cambacérés entered. "Well, gentlemen," said the First Consul, "we go to mass this morning; what say they to that in Paris?"—"Many people," replied Cambacérés, "propose to attend the first representation, in order to hiss the piece should they not find it amusing."—"If any one takes it into his head to hiss, I shall have him put to the door by the grenadiers of the consular guard!"—"But if the grenadiers themselves take to hissing like the rest?"—"As to that I have no fear; my old moustaches will go here to Notre Dame just as at Cairo they would have gone to the mosque. They will remark how I do; and, seeing their general grave and decent, they will be so too, passing the word to each other,—'countersign—*Decency.*'"—"But," said Joseph, "I am afraid

the general officers will not be so accommodating. I have just been with Augereau, who is all fire and fury against what he calls your monkish mania. It will prove no easy matter to bring him and some others within the pale of holy mother church."—"Bah!" interrupted Napoleon, "so Augereau puts on airs! I know him: he will bluster; but if he has any imbecile cousin, for whom he finds it difficult to provide, he will send him to college in hopes I may make him an almoner. Apropos," turning to the second consul, "Cambacérès, when does your brother set out to take possession of the see of Rouen? I assure you it is one of the richest archbishoprics in France. He shall be a cardinal within the year; it is a matter settled." The complaisant colleague made one of his best bows, with his sweetest smiles, and thenceforth became a strenuous supporter of the church and her establishments! How many acted like Cambacérès! Was there any thing wonderful in Bonaparte's contempt of mankind, judging of the whole from those of whom he had experience? "I have only to gild the badge for your honest republicans!" he would say, and could affirm with truth, "and they are my humble servants; I have but to promise bread to your infidels, and they would be priests!"

Among all the events, however, which marked the early part of 1802, the peace with England, ratified by the treaty of Amiens on the 25th of April, tended most directly to the immediate consolidation of Bonaparte's power, both as it was thus acknowledged abroad and felt to be beneficial at home. The occasion, also, afforded to Josephine an opportunity of exercising her powers of pleasing upon some of the most celebrated of our countrymen, whose reception at the Tuileries and in the more marked cases at Malmaison left an impression in her favour, not without its effects in arrangements of a much ulterior date. Of all the English of every

rank who then crowded to Paris, Mr. Fox, though visiting France as a simple individual, drew the largest share of attention. The unostentatious, yet highly respectful manner in which Madame Bonaparte's first especial invitation was conveyed to the English statesman showed perfect understanding of the admirable simplicity of his character. Mr. Fox, accompanied by Lord and Lady Holland, had been invited to a dejeuné at Madame Recamier's, whose beauty and talent had acquired for her the greatest name in a species of reputation of all others most courted in France, though scarcely known among ourselves,—conversational reputation. This, though it leaves behind no debt of admiration to be paid by posterity, by throwing a charm over social intercourse, is of all the merely pleasing qualifications best entitled to the gratitude of contemporaries. The party was numerous, including, besides most of the distinguished names in the warfare and literature of the period, several other English guests,—as the Dutchess of Gordon, and her daughter the present Dutchess of Bedford, the British ambassador, and the particular friend of Fox, Mr., afterward Lord, Erskine. Breakfast had nearly concluded, when the sounds of horsemen in haste resounded in the court, and in a few minutes Eugene Beauharnais was announced. Advancing to Madame Recamier, and expressing his regret at having come late, where the invitation had been so agreeable to himself, the young soldier turned to Mr. Fox, and said, "I hope, sir, soon to be enabled in some measure to indemnify myself for the loss of your society I have sustained; I am commissioned by my mother to attend you to Malmaison, and precede only by a few minutes the carriages destined for you and your friends, when you can resolve on leaving so many charms as must detain you here. I shall have much pleasure in acting as your guide." Eugene and the young friend by whom he was accompanied, Philippe de Segur,

now so deservedly known as the author of the "Russian Campaign," like those accustomed to the hasty meals of the First Consul, sat down to coffee, and, in a few minutes, the company rose and separated into groups. It was observed, that Moreau and Fox went out arm and arm for a walk in the park. After a short adjournment to the saloon, where Talma gave some of his astonishing recitations from the translated scenes of Othello and Macbeth, the party broke up, and Mr. Fox, with his friends, repaired to Malmaison in the First Consul's carriage, which had been in waiting.

Nothing could be more amiable or gracious than their reception at Malmaison. Josephine made use of all her unrivalled powers of pleasing, which she could so well do without effort, and completely succeeded. In his own words, our great statesman "retired enchanted with the elegance and grace of all he saw and heard." With the best taste, every thing like parade had been banished: the party was almost a family one. Before dinner, Madame Bonaparte, knowing his taste for botany and agricultural pursuits, conducted her guest through her fine collections of rare plants, talked of improvements, and seemed anxious to profit by his opinions. Of the impression made in return, it is sufficient merely to recall the brief eulogium, but, coming from Bonaparte, full of deep meaning,—"Mr. Fox is truly a superior man." On leaving Malmaison, Mr. Fox drove to the Theatre Français, where he was recognised, and saluted with unanimous plaudits. Perhaps no man, whose claims to respect in a foreign country rested solely on his personal merit and reputation, ever received a more flattering mark of public esteem, than this disinterested applause. The previous public reception of Mr. Fox by the First Consul at the Tuileries had been marked by extraordinary courtesy. In the first apartment into which he was shown he found his own bust; and on passing into the saloon of

audience, the First Consul advanced towards him, and said, "Mr. Fox, I congratulate myself on seeing you in Paris. I have long admired you as an orator, and as a sincere friend of your country. I esteem myself fortunate in your acquaintance." In almost every evening party—and these were at this period peculiarly splendid and agreeable at Malmaison—Mr. Fox appeared, and we have the evidence of others present, that the First Consul, of all his guests or visiters, saw the English statesman with the greatest pleasure. Yet how much Napoleon had mistaken the character of the man whom he so much admired, evidently appears from the fact, that, in his subsequent plans of invasion, he calculated upon the co-operation of the political party which Mr. Fox headed; as if any difference of opinion at home could ever disunite Britons in the defence of their country against a foreign foe!

At this time, when the best society of Europe had assembled in Paris, and when France had begun to recover from the storms of revolution, pleasure seemed to be the universal pursuit. In the amusements of a capital, thus more than usually gay, the masked ball at the *Salon des Etrangers*, where the Marquis de Livry officiated as master of the ceremonies, took the lead. Under the protection of a domino, various, of course, were the affairs besides dancing here carried on. Gaming, in particular, reached a fearful excess; and many are the broad acres in Britain that yet feel the pressure of a bad run at the *Salon des Etrangers*. Four thousand pounds was no extraordinary sum to be risked on a single card; and twelve thousand guineas might be seen to change hands at a single throw. An Englishman was in the constant practice of giving the servant a louis each time that he required any thing. In one evening he had given him *ten* pieces. "My lord," said the attendant, surprised at this generosity, "you are probably not aware that no one is required

to pay here."—"Poh! poh! it signifies little," was the reply; "when a man can afford to be five thousand pounds richer or poorer, according as a card is red or black, he may well give a few louis to a poor devil at the back of his chair; so, my good fellow, here are ten others, just to convince you that I acted under no mistake." In this scene of dissipation the First Consul never made his appearance; he disliked play, and would have found it impossible to conceal himself under any disguise. Josephine, however, did sometimes pass an hour in looking at the dancers, usually attended by her son. On one of these occasions a circumstance took place too interesting to be omitted here, especially as it corroborates some earlier particulars of the narrative. "Chance," says the baroness whom we have already quoted, "rendered me witness of a singular scene at one of these balls. It was near two in the morning, the crowd immense, and the heat overpowering. I had ascended for a little to the apartments above, and, refreshed by the cool air, was about to descend, when a sound of voices in the adjoining apartment, in earnest conversation, caught my attention. 'Whoever would hear,' says Beaumarchais, 'must necessarily listen;' so, applying my ear to the partition, I might probably have soon satisfied my curiosity, had not the name of Bonaparte, and the discovery that Josephine and Madame Tallien were the speakers, excited a real curiosity. 'I declare, my dear Theresina,' said the former, 'that I have done all friendship could dictate, but in vain. No later than this morning I made a new effort. Bonaparte would hear of nothing. I cannot comprehend what can have prejudiced him so strongly against you. You are the only woman whose name he has effaced from the list of my particular friends; and from fear lest he should manifest his displeasure directly against us have I now come hither alone with my son. At this moment they believe me sound asleep in my bed in

the château (Tuileries); but I determined on coming to see, to warn, and to console you; above all, to justify myself.' 'Josephine,' replied the other lady, 'I have never doubted either the goodness of your heart or the sincerity of your affection. Heaven is my witness, that the loss of your friendship would be to me much more painful than any dread of Bonaparte. In these difficult times I have maintained a conduct that might, perhaps, render my visits an honour; but I will never importune you without his consent. He was not consul when Tallien followed him into Egypt—when I received you both into my house—when I shared with you'—here a burst of tears interrupted the speaker's words. 'Calm yourself,' replied Josephine; 'be calm, my dear Theresina! let the storm pass. I am paving the way for a reconciliation; but we must not irritate him more. You know that he does not love Ouvrard, and it is said he often sees you.' 'What, then! because he governs France, does he hope to tyrannize over our hearths?—must we sacrifice to him our private friendships?' At these words some one knocked at the door; it was Beauharnais. 'Madam,' said he, 'you have been now more than an hour absent; the council of ministers is perhaps over; what will the First Consul say should he not find you on his return?' The two ladies slowly descended the stairs, still conversing in earnest whisper, followed by Eugene."

It is not easy to explain Bonaparte's resentment against Madame Tallien save on the general principle which regulated his conduct throughout,—that of ingratitude to all who had ever rendered him essential service in the season of his obscurity. He wished to appear the creator of his own fortunes; and whatever might derogate from such a claim must be discountenanced. At the same time, this did not prevent his being occasionally ostentatiously grateful for benefits of small account. The declared cause

of his aversion would, in proper circumstances, have been praiseworthy; but it was odious to pretend so much respect for purity and decorum of manners while he suffered in the examples of his own sisters, with the exception of Madame Murat, the grossest instances of the reverse. Against Ouvrard, the famous banker, whose fêtes at this very time outdid in splendour the entertainments of sovereigns, there existed two causes of complaint. He had refused to lend money when the consul could not give sufficient security; and next, it was a maxim with the latter, "A man possessed of thirty millions (a million and a quarter sterling) will always be dangerous in my government."* Meanwhile, Josephine had causes of nearer sorrow than even the disgrace of ancient friends. Bonaparte had now in the view of his ambition the founding of a new dynasty. His hopes of posterity in his own line had daily less chance of being realized; and divorce, she knew, was already talked of by her enemies. Circumstances, too, perhaps of themselves necessary, and which certainly did not warrant the interpretation, seemed to her thus alarmed anxiety to indicate a decrease in her husband's affection. More ceremony and state in the consular establishment introduced also colder forms of domestic intercourse. During the earlier period of the consulate, both at Malmaison and in the Tuileries, the First Consul and his spouse occupied the same bedchamber, not differing here from the homeliest citizen and his wife. This continued for some time at St. Cloud. But soon after the occupation of that palace, they had not only separate apartments, but those were placed at a considerable distance from each other, at the opposite extremities of a long corridor, to the right and left of which were the chambers of the principal ladies of the court. At one end Bonaparte's apartment opened

* For an account of Ouvrard's amazing speculations, see Bourdenne, vol. iii. p. 152, 2d edit.

on a level with the floor of the corridor; but at the other Josephine's was still farther removed by a flight of several steps. The grief occasioned to the latter by this separation, arising from the construction which she put upon the change, was very great. Exactly for the same reason, the occasions upon which less coldness had taken place in conjugal arrangements, and Napoleon, instead of passing the night in his own, had slept in his wife's apartment, were known to the whole household in the morning. Josephine at such times always appeared later than usual, for they generally passed half the night in conversation. "I think I see her still," says a very respectable member of the household, "coming into breakfast upon such occasions, looking quite cheerful, rubbing her little hands (a habit of hers when in good-humour), and apologizing for having risen so late. On such occasions she was, if possible, more gracious than wont; refused nobody; and we were sure of obtaining every thing we asked, as I have myself many times experienced." We cannot but regret that affections so kind and so artlessly displayed should ever have been crossed. For the present, however, her fears were vain. The power granted by the nation of appointing a successor to the perpetual consulship, his yet unfixed policy, the birth of a son to Louis, and chiefly his undoubted affection for Josephine, effaced from Napoleon's mind the impressions which were certainly attempted to be made, previous even to the empire, in favour of a divorce.

Meanwhile, the peace with England had produced only a cessation of hostilities for a few months; war, and with it projects of invasion, were renewed. At this time, too, the correspondence between Napoleon and the Bourbons finally closed, by an absurd offer on his part of an independent principality to the latter in return for their formal resignation of the crown of France. To bring this negotiation to a

favourable issue in the restoration of the Bourbons had been a favourite object with Josephine. She laboured assiduously but prudently in their cause, both from attachment and interest. She had even a presentiment that her election to the throne of France would terminate in her own misfortune and in the ruin of Napoleon. "To be the wife of the First Consul," she often repeated, "fulfils my utmost ambition; only let me remain so." "Give the Bourbons hope," she would say to Bonaparte; "at least that pledges you to nothing." Meantime, she improved the season of indecision thus prolonged by giving facilities to their friends of negotiating; and it is only justice to say, that the Bourbons at first showed themselves disposed to be grateful to both. Now it is not so, otherwise the grandson of Josephine would not have been formally excepted among the candidates to the Belgian crown.

Besides the revolutionary conflicts, the first and with one sad exception, the only time that Josephine mingled in something like active warfare, was at Boulogne. Her progress to and from the coast, indeed, and her residence there, resembled rather a festive procession (for every town had its presents or its fêtes) than a warlike progress by Napoleon, whom she accompanied. She beheld, however, a gallant and well-appointed army watched by a British fleet, and occasionally witnessed an exchange of no friendly salute as the ships bore in to reconnoitre or to cut off a convoy. The cannon even which announced her own and the consul's arrival were answered by bullets from the hostile squadron. The invading troops were stationed in four separate camps; but the principal one, with head-quarters, occupied the heights of Boulogne. The whole adjacent coast bristled with the most formidable batteries. Thus, what with the guns in position, those of the flotilla, and of the English ships in the attack which Nelson made upon the French armament in

the autumn preceding the peace, eighteen hundred pieces of ordnance thundered at once. After seven hours of fighting, the British admiral drew off, having inflicted some and suffered much injury from this "coast of iron." Great additions had since been made; the port of Boulogne was defended by no less than four separate forts, each mounting cannon and mortars of extraordinary caliber, from twenty-fours to forty-twos; while the chain of the flotilla anchored across the entrance amounted to two hundred and fifty gunboats; each of these, which were of the largest class, carried six guns,—three twenty-four pounders, with two bow and one stern chaser. The small craft and flat-bottomed praams intended for landing the troops which crowded both harbours exceeded seventeen hundred. These were further secured by an immense iron chain drawn across the entrance, and locked to the forts, which were two on each side. Two hundred thousand of the bravest soldiers in the world waited but the word to man this armament, and be under way for the shores of Britain in six hours! Such was the evidence now presented to Josephine of the power of him with whom her destinies were united; and never, perhaps, did it appear in a more imposing attitude; certainly, at no subsequent period was that power more real, for now it carried with it the wills and the wishes of Frenchmen. As a proof of this, the following, which Josephine witnessed, not without tears, may be mentioned among a thousand instances of a similar character. At the Pont de Brigues, a village about two miles from Boulogne, a deputation waited upon the consul, one of whom read from a paper this address:—"General, we are here, twenty fathers of families, who present to you twenty gallant youths, to be now and always under your orders. Accept of them, general; they are able to do good service when you reach England. As for ourselves, we have another duty to discharge; our

hands shall labour the soil, that bread may not be wanting to the brave men destined to crush England." None of all the various expeditions proposed or undertaken by Bonaparte excited so much of popular cordiality as this design of invasion. When we consider, too, the spirit of aggression and the enthusiastic resolution of defence which animated the respective nations, the view of the probable consequences awakens appalling thoughts of what misery might have been wrought by the ambition of one man. In a country where each family hearth sent forth its combatants with but one heartfelt alternative of victory or death, two hundred thousand—a million of invaders must have melted away; yet they were brave, and their fall would not have been unrevenged. Eager, however, as they were to meet Britons on British ground, the French never would have reached our shores. While gazing only on the gigantic preparations around, Josephine, like others, might have regarded her husband as master of both elements; but beyond the horizon, or hovering on its verge, might be descried the hostile fleet, of such force that it watched a certain prey. We revert to these things because of late it has been denied, on Bonaparte's own authority, that he ever entertained serious thoughts of invading Britain. In reply to this, it can only be said, that the commanders of the armament most in his confidence firmly believed in the reality of the project; that no one at the time ever heard its seriousness doubted; and that he relinquished the ostensible design not until its impracticability seemed manifest, and when circumstances permitted him adroitly, it must be confessed, to transfer these mighty means to another end.

Where so many "gay gallants" were assembled, with little to do, amusement of some kind became indispensable. Reviews, love, gaming, duels, attacks on the flotilla, false alarms, &c. have consequently left many anecdotes on record singularly

characteristic of the French soldiery. The almost daily reviews, as is well known, had two objects in view: to improve the skill of the army, and increase attachment to the person of its leader. One day, Bonaparte, having particularly remarked the excellent order of two regiments of the line and one of light infantry, called the officers in front, from the colonel to the corporal, and expressed in very flattering terms his satisfaction with the appearance of the men. This distinction excited no jealousy, for all had received or expected commendation; but in the evening, a number of the soldiers of the favoured regiments, the 36th, 57th, and 10th, assembled at a public-house a little way out of Boulogne, which was also a favourite resort of the grenadiers of the guard. At first every thing went on in an amicable way, until certain couplets, composed on the events of the morning, happened to be recited by some of the inhabitants who had mixed with the military. The grenadiers for a time maintained an ominous silence, but finally protested against such verses being sung in their presence. The line interposed in their turn; a quarrel arose, first of words, afterward some blows were exchanged. On this they instantly separated, each quietly passing a challenge to his nearest opponent. At four o'clock next morning above two hundred grenadiers of the guard separately stole out to the place of meeting, where had assembled in like manner an equal number of the three regiments. To it they went, sword in hand, without a word of explanation, and for more than an hour continued the combat with fearful obstinacy. They would probably have been massacred to a man had not General St. Hilaire, obtaining late information of this sanguinary quarrel, galloped to the spot with a regiment of cavalry. In the conflict the guards lost ten, and the line thirteen men; but the wounded on both sides were much more numerous. On the morrow, the First Consul assembled the regiments who had

provoked the quarrel, and addressed them:—"Many brave men have fallen in a contest unworthy of them and of you. You shall be punished. I have ordered the couplets to be printed, that the army may know how you have detracted from the merit of your companions in arms."

The following incident also belongs to the present portion of our narrative, and presents Bonaparte in a very pleasing light. Among the belles who, from all Picardy, the surrounding provinces, the Netherlands even, and Paris, had resorted to Boulogne as an agreeable watering-place, was a beautiful *intriguante* from Dunkirk. The whole staff of the army of invasion seemed to have made it a point of honour to gain the good graces of the "fair Netherlander." But of all those who thus offered their hourly homage, greatly to the annoyance of the worthy carpenter in whose house, up one pair of stairs, Rue des Minims, the lady held her court, Colonel Joseph and General-in-chief Soult were the favoured swains. Such a rivalship, of course, did no injury to the interests, while it went far to salve the reputation of Madame F——, for she managed to retain both as danglers. The First Consul, having got notice of the lady's *soirées* held as aforesaid, and desirous, perhaps, of witnessing which of all his officers was the best carpet knight, took a fancy one evening to present himself in the *petit salon* of their fair enslaver. But lest he might be discovered, which, for many reasons, was a consummation of his frolic desirable to be avoided, he disguised himself in coloured clothes, and, putting on a wig and spectacles, was introduced along with General Bertrand, already in high favour, and similarly disguised, as commissary of provisions. He found the lady, as she had been represented, young, beautiful, and accomplished, capable of turning the heads of half his army. The company was numerous, the play deep, and the eyes of the guests so riveted on the gold which loaded

the tables, or fixed on her who presided with so much eclat, that the First Consul, unremarked, having completed his observations, was about to retire, when Madame F——, perceiving his movement towards the door, and desirous that her company should not diminish so early, interposed against the exit of the pretended commissaries. On her invitation, the players deserted the tables, and, ranging themselves in a circle, a game at forfeits was proposed. When it came to Bonaparte's turn to give a pledge, he found he had absolutely nothing about him save a piece of paper, folded up, on which the names of certain colonels intended for service on the morrow were inscribed. This, after a good deal of fumbling for something else, he was constrained to resign, requesting it might not be opened. The pledges being collected and the penalties imposed, the task assigned to the great captain was to stand door-keeper, while Colonel Joseph and the lady should make the voyage to Cytherea in an adjoining apartment. The commissary consul, putting the best face upon the matter, performed his part with a good grace, and, having thus recovered his pledge, took his departure. A few minutes after, a billet was handed to Madame F——, couched in the following terms:—

"MADAM,—Accept my thanks for the agreeable reception with which you favoured me. If you come some day to my barrack I will play the porter once again, should it seem good unto you; but on that occasion I shall not resign to others the duty of accompanying you in a voyage to Cytherea.

"BONAPARTE."

The beautiful voyager perused the note in silence; and the party breaking up soon afterward, left her in solitude to reflect on the visit she had received.

The First Consul and Madame Bonaparte, having

left Boulogne, returned to Paris by way of Flanders and the Netherlands. In traversing Picardy, they were to pass twenty-four hours in Abbeville, where magnificent preparations had been made for their reception. The streets in many places were spread with carpets, and the upper ranks of the inhabitants brought from their gardens and hothouses the rarest plants, to range them along the path. But just as the expected guests approached the city, a courier at full speed was seen to meet them; a consultation was apparently held, when those who had anxiously made all these voluntary preparations beheld the First Consul get on horseback, place Josephine's carriage in the centre of a small escort of lancers, and in this guise traverse the streets, with all their decorations, at a gallop. The courier had been expedited from the minister of police with information of a plot to assassinate Bonaparte next day on leaving Abbeville, at a solitary place about six miles beyond the town. On this very spot he now halted with his slender cavalcade for about half an hour; and, after eating some of the famed Abbeville biscuits, continued his route. Everywhere in the principal towns, as Amiens, Dunkirk, Lille, Bruges, Gand, Brussels, Liege, Naumur, Antwerp, &c., they were received with almost regal honours; the keys were presented to the First Consul as to the ancient sovereigns; and while he gave directions for improvements, canals, roads, bridges, Josephine left a remembrance behind of less ostentatious, but, for her, more suitable and hardly less useful benevolence.

Soon after returning to St. Cloud, a very serious accident happened to the First Consul, which also placed Josephine in considerable danger. The inhabitants of Antwerp, during the late progress, had presented six magnificent bays; with four of these harnessed to the carriage, Bonaparte, with his wife and Cambacérès, were taking an airing in the park,

when, conceiving a fancy to drive four-in-hand, he mounted the coachbox, and Cæsar, his favourite coachman, took station behind. This same appellation of Cæsar, by-the-way, was a nickname; the man had followed Bonaparte into Egypt, and, in a skirmish with the Arabs, killed a Bedouin with his own hand. "See," cried the general, "what a devil of a fellow is coachee!—he is a Cæsar!" The cognomen took, to the supplanting of the real name, which was Germain. Further, it seems that this respectable person has hitherto been much belied in the accounts of the infernal machine; for a reputable eyewitness declares that he saw Cæsar five minutes afterward, and that, so far from being drunk, he was quite *recent;* neither did he take the explosion for a salute of artillery; but being two minutes too late, he would have made a point of honour of driving across the fiery gulf had it lain in his way. To return: Bonaparte having thus taken the reins, the horses soon discovered that Cæsar's hand no longer guided them, and set off at a gallop. In the writings from St. Helena, wherein Bonaparte has shown so earnest a solicitude to appear great even in small things, it is said, "that the aid-de-camp, having awkwardly crossed their heads, frightened the horses and made them run off." This was not the case; at least, others present saw no aid-de-camp, nor, indeed, was any other cause required to produce the catastrophe save the inexperience of the First Consul as a driver of *cattle*, whatever might be his practice as to *men*. The horses, soon becoming quite ungovernable, rushed along the road leading to Breteuil, Cæsar from behind calling out "to keep in the middle;" Cambacérés, still paler, if possible, than his usual cadaverous hue, crying out from the interior, "Stop! stop!" and Madame Bonaparte sitting in silent resignation. The First Consul neither heard nor saw; for, on approaching the extremities of the avenue, though the coachman continued to cry "To

the left! to the left!" he could not take the gateway, but, running against one of the pillars, overset the coach with a terrible crash. Fortunately, the horses stopped. Madame Bonaparte and the second consul escaped with some slight bruises and a great fright Bonaparte himself had been pitched to a distance of eight or ten paces, and, falling on his face, was taken up insensible. He quickly recovered, however, and, though severely bruised, would not be bled, nor resort to any other save his favourite remedy of frictions with eau de Cologne. Josephine of the whole party suffered most from anxiety on her husband's account; but on retiring at night, both amused themselves with talking over the misadventure of the morning. "Mon ami," said Josephine, laughing, "you must render unto Cæsar the things that be Cæsar's—let him keep his whip—each to his vocation." Bonaparte continued the conversation for some time in the same tone of pleasantry; but, gradually lapsing into seriousness, spoke of his never having thought himself so near death, and that he believed he had been dead for some seconds; then crossing his arms, and musing for about a minute, as if half soliloquizing, half addressing Josephine, he abruptly exclaimed,—"But what is death? It is merely a sleep without dreams!"

The winter of 1803–4 passed away without much of domestic interest in the life of Josephine. The marriage of the Prince Borghese to Pauline, the widow of General Le Clerc, the most dissipated, but the best-hearted and the favourite sister of Bonaparte, formed an incident in the early part of the season; but we hasten to the events which marked the spring of 1804. Hitherto Napoleon had displayed an insatiable ambition indeed; but he was personally unstained by crime, and regarded by the vast majority of the French people with gratitude and admiration. Among foreign powers he might be feared—perhaps hated—but he had caused his person and his

government to be respected. The death of the Duke d'Enghien, with the complication of plots, executions, and banishments connected with that melancholy history, presented him to Europe and to France as a gloomy and ferocious tyrant, a cold-blooded murderer. Such was then the opinion of contemporaries, and such must still be the impression left upon the minds of posterity, whatever share the advice or officious zeal of minor agents might have had in urging the catastrophe. Into these transactions it is, of course, intended to enter no farther than concerns the present subject; and it is no more than candour to admit in the outset, that so far as can be judged from the conversations of Josephine, even in her most unguarded confidences, she at least ever retained the conviction that others were more criminal than her husband.

The whole tissue of events is spread over a space of nearly four months, from the arrest of Pichegru, on the night of the 22–23d of February, to the execution of Georges and his accomplices on the 10th of June. But so far as concerns Josephine, the time is much shorter and matters less complicated; we have to speak only of her exertions to save those implicated in the conspiracy of Pichegru and Cadoudal, and principally of her knowledge of the facts connected with the death of the Duke d'Enghien. For the best and only authentic recital of the whole, the reader is referred to the Memoirs of M. de Bourrienne.* But while we consult his narrative for the facts, we must protest against one of his general conclusions,—that the conspirators were not deserving of death. Granting, as he has shown, that these unhappy men were first deceived, afterward betrayed, by the police and the machinations of Fouché, still they were clearly convicted of having entered into a base conspiracy to take away life, and, there-

* See author's translation of the work, second edition, last two chapters of vol. ii.

fore, by every human law, had forfeited theirs to offended justice.

At a very early hour in the morning of the 21st of March, Bonaparte entered his wife's bedroom, and awoke her with the intelligence that the Duke d'Enghien had arrived a prisoner at the outer barriers of Paris. Josephine threw herself from her bed, and on her knees conjured him to spare the life of the unfortunate Bourbon. "We have gone too far to retreat," he replied, in a tone of sadness, at the same time raising her by the hand, "but we shall see;" and again went out. It is well known that the duke remained at the barrier for five hours, during which space there can be no doubt that the secret council was held which determined his fate. It was not till six o'clock in the morning that the cavalcade received orders to move round the walls, and to take the route for Vincennes, where the duke arrived at nightfall.

Bonaparte at St. Helena denies having spoken to Josephine on the subject of the Duke d'Enghien. Many circumstances, however, prove this to have been a false assertion; and the above is the substance of what Josephine herself stated in the month of July following at Saverne, in Lorraine.

On the morning of the fatal 21st, Napoleon's favourite attendant entered his bedroom as usual at seven o'clock. The duke had been shot about an hour before in the fosse at Vincennes. The First Consul was alone, for Josephine and he had now separate apartments. Contrary to custom, he was awake; his head hung drooping over his pillow, his expression was gloomy, and his look harassed. On seeing Constant he sat up, and, drawing his hand several times across his forehead, complained of pain. Then flinging the bedclothes from him with violence, he added, "I have passed a bad, a very bad night!" He seemed completely absorbed in his own thoughts, looking so sad and so ill as to excite the

surprise and even compassion of his affectionate attendants; for by this time the faithful Roustan, his favourite Mameluke, had as usual taken a station beside the toilet table. During the whole time of dressing, Bonaparte spoke not a word,—a sure sign to his domestics, with whom in the morning he was always extremely familiar, that something had happened to agitate and distress their master. Just as his toilet was completed, and while Constant was presenting to him as usual his snuff-box, handkerchief, and little packet of lozenges, the door opened, and Josephine appeared in dishabille as she had risen from bed. It was now but too evident that something fatal had happened; nothing that was not fatal to her husband's honour or peace could have brought her thus into his presence, with visage discomposed, and covered with tears, and every personal care neglected. She entered, or rather rushed, into the apartment, crying, "The Duke d'Enghien is dead! Oh! my friend, what hast thou done!" and threw herself, sobbing, on his bosom. Napoleon became pale as a corpse, pressed her in his arms, and exclaimed, with extraordinary emotion, "The wretches —they have been too hasty!" He hung over her for a moment, then left the apartment, supporting Josephine, who was incapable of walking without such assistance, along the corridor separating their bedrooms, and entered with her, vainly endeavouring to bestow that consolation of which at the moment, it was evident, he stood in need himself.

To the narrative above might be added many melancholy reminiscences of Josephine, long after she had become the repudiated wife of him whose culpability she showed herself so desirous of explaining away. Here, then, there could hardly be any secret lurking of self; and at least she is entitled to command the belief that such was her own opinion. "We were talking," says Madame Decrest, speaking of a residence at Malmaison in 1810, "in

presence of the empress, concerning the deplorable event which plunged France in grief and tarnished the glory of Napoleon. We formed a small circle of her confidential ladies, and she spoke without disguise and with profound sadness of her own inability to prevent the catastrophe. 'The emperor,' continued she, 'was cruelly counselled. Of himself he never would have conceived the idea of such a design. Once resolved, no power on earth could prevent its execution, so firm was his determination in all things, and so great the dread he entertained of being taxed with irresolution. But I am persuaded that often has he lamented over a too prompt obedience on the part of others. There are facts which I dare not disclose, lest I should give up to infamy the real authors of the death of the Duke d'Enghien. History *will speak*, and the truth be known. Finally, General Moreau proved the innocent cause of that fatal resolution. Napoleon and he were conversing about the Bourbons, when the former asked if there was a soldier in the family?—"Yes," replied the general, "they are all brave! The Duke d'Enghien is besides an excellent officer, and much loved by the soldiery. He is a worthy scion of the house of Condé."—"Is he ambitious?"—"As to that I cannot answer; but from his manner of fighting he appears to aspire to a glory which cannot long be satisfied with foreign service."—This eulogium,' added the empress, 'disquieted Napoleon, and several times he reverted to the subject. In order to calm these apprehensions, a crime was proposed to him. Never can I cease to think with abhorrence of those who urged him to it. *They have proved his worst enemies.*'"

Many other such avowals of Josephine's might be quoted, but, conceding to these all the weight to which they are justly entitled, what is the inference from the whole? Simply that Bonaparte had those around him who were ready, at any expense of crime, to second effectually his darkest resolves and

his worst passions. Still, this lessens not the criminality of him who must have framed these resolves into actual commands before even the readiest agents would have dared to act.

It is worthy of remark, that this, the bloodiest of Napoleon's acts, affords an opportunity of recording the general character for gentleness and right feeling which Josephine had conciliated. At the period of his arrest the duke resided in Ettenheim, chiefly that he might enjoy for a little longer, before retiring into the Austrian states, the society of a young lady to whom he was affectionately attached. On the fatal morning of his execution, during the brief space of a few minutes allowed for hasty preparation, he made up a little packet, containing his picture and a lock of his hair, which he consigned to Savary,—"a gentle gift, by a rude messenger,"—to be delivered to Josephine's care, that he might thus ensure their safe transmission to Ettenheim. Strange contrast! the tenderest of pledges intrusted to the wife of that man who had commanded the murder of the testator!

Meanwhile, events of vast magnitude hurried onwards. However Napoleon might feel in retirement,—and it is but justice to say that for some time a cloud seemed to have come over his thoughts,—he kept in his apartments, "darkly, sternly, and all alone," and general gloom and constraint overshaded his domestic relations; abroad he was himself. The crown of France, so long in prospect, might now no farther mock his grasp. March and April passed in bustle and intrigue; and on the 30th of the latter month, the motion for restoring the throne was proposed and carried in the tribunate, and soon after ratified by a complaisant senate.

## CHAPTER VII.

Josephine Empress—Her Letter to Napoleon—Formation of the Imperial Court—Letters by Josephine—Conspirators—Exertions of the Empress for their Pardon—Anecdotes of the Polignacs—De Rivière—Affecting Scene—Anecdotes of Moreau and Napoleon—First public Appearance as Empress—Legion of Honour—Grandeur and Meanness—Napoleon and Alexander the Great—Tour to Mayence—Josephine's Mode of Travelling—Anecdotes—Napoleon rejoins the Empress—Espionage—Continuation of the Journey—Breakfast—The Dinner—Method of examining Magistrates—Evening's Tales—Return to Paris—Letter from Josephine to Pius VII.—Religious Marriage of Josephine—Ceremonial of the Coronation—Dresses, Anecdotes, &c.—Napoleon's Visit to Brienne—Coronation at Milan—Josephine Regent—Letter to Cambacérès—Austerlitz announced—Marriage of Eugene—Description of the Manners, Life, Occupations, and Amusements of Josephine as Empress, with Anecdotes of her Character—Letters—Anecdotes of Napoleon and of the Imperial Household, with other Illustrations of this Subject.

On the 18th of May, 1804, Josephine became Empress of France. Thus the destiny was fulfilled in the prediction of which she had professed so long to believe, yet trembled at the thought of its accomplishment. On that day the senate, in solemn deputation, headed by Cambacérès, waited upon the consul at St. Cloud, who was thus first saluted *sire* by his ancient colleague. The deputation afterward proceeded to the apartments of Josephine, who received their congratulations, not without deep emotion, but with her accustomed benignity and grace. The assemblage was of course most brilliant. Cambacérès assumed more than his usual gravity of manner, and the first ceremonial passed with the requisite decorum. When, however, in the less stately intercourse that followed, the ex-second consul, always solemn and dignified, addressed certain unimportant remarks to Hortense, introduced with the perfectly appropriate, but somewhat novel phrase, "Your august mother," some strange asso-

ciation flitting athwart her fancy, she found it impossible to restrain the impulse; but looking archly on the speaker, gave way very audibly to her risible propensities. The composure of Cambacérés, though sustaining a rude shock, remained proof against this assault on his dignity; and the first hour of the empire went by without any very overt act against the solemn laws of etiquette.

The remainder of this eventful day was occupied in presentations, receptions, and congratulations. At court, all indicated the greatest joy and satisfaction; but in the midst of this general rejoicing (and she, at least, witnessed nothing else), Josephine had contemplated its cause with fear and trembling. The following letter, addressed to her husband during one of his frequent visits to Boulogne, exhibits an interesting exposition of her sentiments when so near the elevation which she deprecated:—

"My Friend,—For the tenth time, perhaps, have I perused your letter, and must confess that the amazement into which it threw me subsides only to give place to sorrow and apprehension. You persist, then, in the resolution to re-establish the throne of France, and yet not to restore those who were deposed by the Revolution, but to seat yourself thereon? What power, you ask—what grandeur—and, above all, what advantage in this design! And for my part, I venture to reply, What obstacles present themselves to its success! how great the sacrifices which must be made before its accomplishment can be secured! how far beyond calculation the consequences should it be realized! But let us admit that your purpose does succeed, will your views terminate with the founding of a new empire? Will not your power, opposed, as to a certainty it must be, by the neighbouring states, draw you into a war with them? This will probably end in their ruin. Will not their neighbours, beholding these effects,

combine in turn for your destruction? While abroad such is the state of things, at home how numerous the envious and discontented!—how many plots to disconcert, and conspiracies to punish! Kings will despise you as an upstart, the people will hate you as a usurper, your equals as a tyrant; none will comprehend the utility of your elevation; all will assign it to ambition or to pride. Doubtless, there will not be wanting slaves who will cringe to your power, until, backed by another which they esteem a more formidable influence, they will seek to elevate themselves on your ruin. Fortunate, also, beyond hope, if steel—if poison!—a wife, a friend, dare not give pause to alarmed imagination on images so dreadful. This brings me to myself, a subject about which my concern would be small indeed if I only were interested. But, with the throne, will there not likewise arise the desire of new alliances? Will you not consider it necessary, by new family ties, to provide for the more effectual security of that throne? Oh! whatever such connexions might be, could they prove like those formed at first in propriety, and which affections the most tender have since consecrated! I stop at this perspective, which fear—must I say love?—traces in an appalling futurity. You have alarmed me by your ambitious flight; restore my confidence by your return to moderation."

How nearly these observations resembled predictions no reader acquainted with the history of the times need be reminded. Josephine's presentiment of misfortune in the undertakings of Napoleon often excited astonishment when men afterward reflected how closely her opinions anticipated results. Bourrienne, for instance, hesitates whether to ascribe this prescience of evil, if not to a supernatural, at least to a peculiar faculty. But if hers were prophetic powers, they had been destined, like Cassandra's, never to be believed; and a woman's will in the path

of Napoleon's ambition was but as the lightest down in the torrent's course. The above letter, however, contains nothing which might not have been foreseen from a calm consideration of events. Josephine's presentiment could, in fact, be nothing more than the perspicacity of an excellent judgment sharpened by heartfelt interest honestly expressed. The concluding portion of the letter expressed, indeed, her apprehensions on occurrences actually, though secretly, passing. We have already said that divorce was often hinted to Napoleon by those who were no friends to Josephine; and during the period immediately preceding the empire, endeavours were making, Talleyrand being very active therein, to bring about a union with the Princess Wilhelmina of Baden, whom the officious minister represented as the most charming princess in Europe. But of these courtly intrigues, as they came to nothing, very little is known; Napoleon's attachment to Josephine withstood all such suggestions, and perhaps she herself was right in stating, "that unless urged by others, he would not of himself have thought of a separation."

It is not surprising, then, that Josephine should have contemplated with a degree of terror her elevation to the throne of France, or that she should have passed a portion of the succeeding night in tears. But hers was a mind rather of lively than of permanent susceptibilities: impressions were readily made, and as quickly effaced; while she possessed the true secret of happiness—the art of postponing the imaginary or apprehended evil, and of enjoying the real good of every situation. It is curious, however, to remark the contrast between individuals so similarly situated. Napoleon retired to rest at an early hour of the morning, having been engaged with his ministers in preparations for the 19th, confident and satisfied. His favourite domestic, entering at the usual hour, found the new emperor

awake, and happy, though serious. "What's o'clock —how is the weather?" the first words always;—Constant replied, "*Sire*, seven o'clock—fine morning;" and, having approached the bed, Napoleon pulled him by the ear, and called him *Monsieur le drôle*—certain signs of the best humour. In this joyous mood he held the first grand imperial levee, in which, with the exception of Lucien, incomes and dignities, as all the world knows, were showered down upon the members of the imperial family and its most distinguished adherents. All Paris was amused—for from what will not Parisians extract amusement—at the stories, true or false, which circulated, of the tears shed by the sisters, till, by their lamentations, they had actually teased their imperial brother into the act of creating them princesses.—Josephine also, though, as she afterward ventured to tell Napoleon himself, she did not cry to that end, had the satisfaction of hearing her son named prince, "without fear of his sentiments falling beneath his rank, however elevated." At the same time, eighteen of the most renowned commanders of republican France were made marshals of the empire, with precedence of all subsequent creations.*

It had been well for Bonaparte, perhaps for France, had he contented himself with thus attaching to his government those who owed their elevation to the same circumstances out of which it had risen; at least, had he not, through a weak prejudice rather than policy, sought to surround himself with the cast-off trappings of a system that could never coalesce with his own. Like all those who, rather through the peculiarity of the times than their own nobility of nature, have risen from an inferior station, Napoleon attached an undue importance to hereditary rank and ancient title. Hence, in the formation of

* For lives of the most celebrated of these soldiers, see "The Court and Camp of Bonaparte."—*Harper's Family Library.*

his new court, the anxiety displayed that its offices might be held by the noblesse of the old. "The Fauxbourg St. Germain was one of Napoleon's bugbears."

But there are distinctions to be made on both sides, for on both sides there was meanness. As respects our present subject, there existed among the emigrant noblesse two parties, which have not always been kept sufficiently distinct. One, the smaller of the two, from having occupied stations near the person of the king, or from attachment to his exiled successor, sought to decline all employment under the empire. But over these members of the ancient aristocracy Napoleon held strong influence, especially as the laws of conscription placed their children, from boyhood, in his power. Accordingly, when an old family, in this situation, proved refractory, he sent brevets of sub-lieutenants to the sons. Even here, however, his predilection in favour of the privileged class was apparent, and produced no little disgust and some ridicule in the army. From the young nobility were chiefly taken the aids-de-camp of the emperor. These, by their affected manners, and from intercepting favours, promotions, and distinctions better deserved by others, obtained the sobriquet of *Les geais de l'armée*,—The jackdaws of the army. Incessantly occupied with their own dear persons, they appeared, in the midst of the bronzed and weather-beaten battalions, dressed as if for some carpet campaign in the Fauxbourg St. Germain. One of these hopeful youths happened to be turned on his back by a chance bullet,—for, being generally with the emperor, they were but little exposed to direct fire; on his splendid red morocco cartouch-box being examined, it was found to be a most complete dressing-box, the pot of rouge even not omitted! Yet these men did not want courage, as the world understands the word—they would have called out their dearest friend for a look;

and if any consideration were wanting to throw detestation and contempt upon duelling, it would be the fact that, while the practice was almost unknown among the brave officers of the French army, duels were common among these "minions of favour, who had often no other title to the grade which they held than the merit of having emigrated."

The other more numerous class of the emigration, who, at the commencement of the empire, rendered themselves especial favourites with the *parvenu* emperor, consisted of those nobles who solicited offices at the new court. Nothing could be more contemptible than the conduct of those personages who in public worshipped the *emperor* and *empress*, while in their own coteries it was *Bonaparte* and *Madame Bonaparte!* With surpassing meanness they laboured most assiduously to conceal their manœuvrings even from themselves; and, while exerting every possible means of solicitation, each professed to the rest of the fraternity to bewail the hard fate of being urged, and, probably, obliged to accept office under the usurper. We have even some precious writings to the same effect by these people. All this, of course, could not fail of creating some amusing predicaments, of which the following may serve as examples:—Madame de la Rochefoucault, who was dame d'honneur, had one day, soon after the 18th, made a visit to her old friends in the Fauxbourg, who pretended to receive her as a renegade, though burning with envy at her elevation. Among others, the empress's lady of honour had called upon the Dutchess de Balby. The latter, enchanted with the opportunity of a covert attack, began thus:—"Madame de Bouilley has just left me; I am sorry you did not arrive a few minutes sooner, for I was taking her to task on the report of her being one of the dames de palais elect; she, however, cleared herself of the intention of accepting office from Madame Bonaparte, in a manner which convinces

me that the whole must be false."—"I cannot understand," replied Madame de la Rochefoucault, "the necessity of the Countess de Bouilley's *defence*, for here is her own petition forwarded to the empress, requesting the place, and here is the nomination which I am authorized to communicate to the petitioner!" We may judge of the astonishment produced by the exhibition of these documents: "But," continued the speaker, "Madame la Duchesse, I doubt not your own application will be favourably heard, and it will give me pleasure to forward your interests." This cut right and left, for the Dutchess de Balby was herself actually an expectant!

Count Lewis de Narbonne, previous to the empire, had distinguished himself by his ultra-royalism. Like most others opposed to Napoleon he corresponded with Madame de Staël. The "fair exile of Copet," for so the authoress was named, had written to the count by one she considered a confidential messenger, and accordingly had not disguised her thoughts on the new order of things, and especially on the conduct of those who had accepted offices at court. Here the writer showed herself extremely witty at the expense of the new dignitaries, concluding with the hope that she should never feel the sorrow of seeing the count's name in the gazette. The bearer of the letter, reflecting whence it had come, naturally thought that the communication would be interesting to Fouché. The minister opened, read, and copied the contents, then, carefully resealing the packet, desired the faithful messenger to execute his commission, and bring him the count's reply. The snare took; Count Lewis answered in a similar but, if possible, more severely satirical tone, on the new courtiers. He was at this very time applicant for the appointment of chamberlain of the empire, which he obtained a day or two after the emperor had read the correspondence above! It is worthy of observation, that none were more remarkably

assiduous in their courtly duties than Count Lewis de Narbonne. "I am afraid," said Josephine, on whose authority the anecdote rests, "that the count's very graceful and innumerable bows will avail nothing, for Napoleon tells me each reverence reminds him of this unlucky correspondence, and occasions him some difficulty in restraining a smile." The count, however, not long afterward, was named imperial ambassador to the court of Vienna, remained in high favour, and deserted among the first the falling fortunes of his master. Napoleon could not, in fact, calculate upon the attachment of such men, and yet had the weakness to think them necessary to him, or, perhaps, as one of their own number says, "he loved the flattery of the old, as being more adroit than that of the new courtiers."

Often, too, Napoleon found matter of great surprise in the choice made by these ancient courtiers. When he offered them commands in his armies, they preferred places in his household. "Is it possible," he would ask, on granting these ignoble requests, "that such men can really be the descendants of the brave men whose names they bear?" The commencement of the empire likewise seemed an auspicious era for disappointed applicants on former occasions to try their fortunes a second time.—Bourienne has mentioned the rebuff experienced from the *consul* by M. de Comminges, one of their companions at the school of Brienne: "The *emperor* may be more friendly disposed," thought M. de Comminges. "Well, sir, how were you employed during the Revolution?—have you served?"—"No, sire."—"You doubtless followed the Bourbons, then, in their exile?"—"Oh no, sire, by no means! I remained at home quietly cultivating my little estate."—"A double folly that, sir: in times of civil trouble, every man ought to expose his person for one party or another. What would you now?"—"Sire, my wishes are moderate; a small place in the customs of my little

native city would render—" "Enough, sir," interrupted Napoleon; "you shall have it; and remain there." "Is it possible," said the emperor, on dismissing him thus, "that such a man can have been my comrade!"

But of all the improprieties of which these members of the ancient aristocracy were guilty at the new court, the most unpardonable was the tone of impertinent affectation of not being dependent on *Madame Bonaparte.* Among these none was more remarkable than the beautiful Dutchess de Chevreuse, whom we cite as an example the rather that the emperor has been accused of unmanly barbarity towards her. As one of the "ladies of the palace" to Josephine, who certainly was any thing but an unkind mistress, Madame de Chevreuse, however, ought to have remembered, that having once accepted place, its duties were to be discharged with a modest respectfulness, neither in base adulation nor overweening assumption. Of this conduct, too, there were models among the order, whom Josephine well knew how to appreciate and to recommend to her husband. Of such demeanour, the Baroness de Montmorency, whose family had shown devoted attachment to the Bourbons, but whose fortune did not permit her refusal of a situation under a new dynasty, exhibited an eminent example. "How infinitely better satisfied," would the empress often repeat, "am I with the dignified reserve of Madame de Montmorency, than with the importunate eagerness of others, who, while they adulate me here at the Tuileries with the basest flattery, will talk of *Madame Bonaparte* in certain saloons of the Fauxbourg St. Germain." That Napoleon also could well discriminate between the two classes the following anecdote proves:—One day he entered the saloon where Josephine and her ladies were assembled, with a most magnificent diamond aigrette, which had just arrived as a present from the sultan. The splendid

gift was prodigiously admired by the courtiers, all the ladies declaring they had never beheld any thing more beautiful. Observing the Baroness de Montmorency among the number, the emperor broke the jewel in two, and presenting her with one half, said, "Permit me, madam, to request your acceptance of this small token of my esteem." The Dutchess de Chevreuse, on the other hand, was banished from the court; the immediate cause of this, indeed, proceeded from a disagreement with *la reine Joseph*, —a very excellent personage, by-the-way; but the punishment was not inflicted before she had given various specimens of an impertinent and, in the relative position of the parties, even vulgar petulance, overlooked at the time, though doubtless not forgotten. Once, for instance, when the dutchess appeared in the drawing-room with a rich headdress of diamonds, Napoleon, who considered himself an adept in the female toilet, approached, and said to her, "What beautiful stones! are they all real?"—"Mon Dieu! sire, how should I know? but, for this place, they are surely good enough!" This unfortunate lady died in a species of exile, not being permitted to approach within a hundred leagues of Paris.—Josephine vainly endeavoured to mollify the emperor's resentment: at length, the dutchess, heart-broken, fell into deep consumption; and that the last hours of the poor sufferer might be in peace, Napoleon's permission was implored for her to expire in the bosom of her family. "She can die," was the stern answer, "as well in the country as at Paris."

All these details relative to the *materiel* of the imperial court essentially belong to the life of Josephine. All these "household troops," as they were termed, made a government whose phraseology continued to be military, manœuvred under her direction, and, as concerned her own establishment, at least, had in the first instance been appointed chiefly through her immediate influence. When the

members of the ancient aristocracy desired to give in their adhesion, or, in other words, "to take service and pay" under the empire, application was in the first place generally made to Madame de Montesson, and through her to the empress. The following notes are further illustrative of this subject.

*The Empress to the Comtesse de Damas.*

"MADAME LA COMTESSE,—I cannot request of the emperor permission to receive your daughter among my ladies; he has positively declared his pleasure that persons attached to the court shall be married. Madame de Montesson will inform you that she could not obtain that favour for her niece (Mademoiselle de Valence). The situation of dame de palais is promised *so soon as she is married;* and solely to the friendship which both the emperor and myself entertain for Madame de Montesson is owing this manner of eluding a difficulty. It gives me pain that I am unable to prove otherwise than by regret the pleasure I should have felt in doing any thing agreeable to you."

Napoleon had taken the resolution mentioned in the note from the scandalous disorders of the courts of his predecessors. Without inquiring further, there certainly prevailed in the imperial court an external decency of manners long unknown in the history of the royal house of France; but his precautions were often carried to an affected excess, especially considering the previous disorders of the Revolution. His general laws of decorum allowed no distinctions, according to circumstances. Of unjust exclusions arising from his attention to mere appearances, rather than real purity, the following letter, while it explains the cause, shows how deeply Josephine felt her inability to reward past services —

*The Empress to the Comtesse de Girardin, formerly Dutchess D'Aiguillon.*

"My dear Friend,—I am most afflicted—and far indeed from beholding my wishes fulfilled, as ancient friends may suppose, who will doubtless believe, that if I do not see them it is because I have forgotten the past. Alas! no; on the contrary, I remember it but too well, and my thoughts dwell upon it more than I would; for the more I think upon what they did for me, the greater is my sorrow at being unable to do now what my heart dictates. The Empress of France is but the first slave in the empire, and cannot acquit the debts of Madame de Beauharnais! This constitutes the torture of my life; and will explain why you do not occupy a place near me; why I do not see Madame Tallien; in fine, why several ladies, formerly our confidential friends, would be strangers to me, were not my memory faithful. The emperor, indignant at the total disregard of morality, and alarmed at the progress it might still make, is resolved that the example of a life of regularity and of religion shall be given in the palace where he commands. Desirous of strengthening more and more the church re-established by himself, and unable to change the laws appointed by her observances, his intention is at least to keep at a distance from his court all those who may have profited by the possibility of divorce. This he has promised to the pope; and hitherto has kept his word. Hence the cause of his refusing the favour I asked of having you with me. The refusal has occasioned me unspeakable regret; but he is too absolute to leave even the hope of seeing him retract. I am thus constrained to renounce the pleasure which I had promised myself of being constantly with you, studying to make you forget the sovereign in the friend. Pity my lot in being too public a personage to follow my own inclination, and cherish for me a

friendship, the remembrance of which gives me now as much pleasure as its reality afforded consolation in prison. Often do I regret that small, dark, and dismal chamber which we shared together, for there at least I could pour out my whole heart—and was sincerely beloved in return."

The reader will not have forgotten that the lady here addressed had been fellow-prisoner with Josephine, and rendered important services in the most eventful crisis of her fate. The following letter exhibits a frank yet dignified appreciation of the superiority of merit over birth, which proves the writer to have been no slave to the prejudices of her rank.

*The Empress to the Archchancellor Cambacérès.*

"M. L'ARCHICHANCELIER,—Permit me to make use of the right which my duties give me of aiding the unfortunate, and of the desire I have ever witnessed in you to assist me in that respect. The object of my present application is to obtain an employment in the emperor's household for M. Cyrille Desforgues: he is a man without birth, fortune, or patronage—but he is unfortunate! All these supports, then, he must find in us. As to birth, both you and I know that it is often good for nothing except to dispense with merit. The emperor would have been still a sub-lieutenant, if, in order to obtain the epaulettes of a general, the only qualification had been to prove his four quarters. I say nothing of fortune, though the emperor requires every one who enters his domestic service to have an assured independence; the real merit, acquired knowledge, and talents of M. Desforgues recommend him to your highness, who will quickly supply this mistake of the blind goddess.

"In the career upon which this honourable man would enter, he will not fail to encounter rivals more favoured, more intriguing, and more adroit; he will

not fear them, nor shall I fear them on his account, when he has you as a guide. I venture to believe you will condescend to become so, since he is unfortunate, and worthy of your protection and mine. I supply new objects for your benevolence; you will add fresh motives for my gratitude."

The new court was at length arranged; and before the close of the empire included, with three or four exceptions, all the ancient nobility of France. In the course of a few months, all things, if not in the most graceful, were at least in the most regular order. From all accounts, ceremony and etiquette were carried far beyond even courtly tiresomeness and monotony. All the traditions surviving among the ancients of the aristocracy, or which could be recovered from the archives of royal usages, were collected and printed in a tome of some magnitude, entitled "Etiquettes of the Court of Napoleon." This formed the manual of the courtiers, wherein the most minute observances were prescribed, and, as an eye-witness has left recorded, "ladies the most distinguished for their wit and talents daily passed hours in the study of its mortal pages." The number of steps was counted, the position of the arms and head fixed, and the curve of salutation described with the same rigorous precision as the exercise of the conscript. This must have been very annoying to all, and occasionally produced awkward pleasantries. For instance, in the first progress made by their imperial majesties, a drawing-room was to be held in one of the cities on the Rhenish frontier. The important affair of presentation occupied of course the thoughts of every one who had any claim to that honour. One of the ladies aspirants to this distinction, knowing a friend who had been presented, wrote for instructions, and received the following:—"You make three courtesies; one on entering the saloon, one in the middle, and a third a few paces farther

on, *en pirouette.*" This last proved a complete mystery, and had nearly *turned* all the respectable heads in Cologne, the scene of expected operations. A consultation was called, the letter communicated, and deep deliberation ensued. Many of the ladies were old—*en pirouette!*—very difficult; some of German blood, were tall—*en pirouette!*—very awkward; some were young—*en pirouette!*—might tumble—very bad that; some were short—*en pirouette!*—looked squat, and they drew themselves up; in fine, all found the reverence *en pirouette* to be a very questionable experiment. At length, a member of the divan proposed the alternative, that since resigning the honour was not even to be thought of, they should prepare, by exercise and practice, for duly appearing in the court *circular*. No sooner said than done; the decision gave universal satisfaction. The conclave broke up; and for the next fifteen days, in all the drawing-rooms of the venerable city of Cologne, from morning till night, the ladies were twirling away like so many spinning-tops or dancing dervishes. Nothing was talked of during the same space but these evolutions; how many circumgirations one could make and yet keep her feet; how many falls another had got, or how gracefully a third performed. Happily, on the evening when the court did actually arrive, and consequently on that preceding the ceremonial, which had given rise to all this activity, the original propounder of the *motion* bethought her of calling upon one of the empress's ladies for still more precise instructions. The redoubted *pirouette* was now found to have been misunderstood, implying simply a gentle inclination, in rising, towards the personages of the court; and Josephine had the satisfaction of being amused by the recital in private, and thus escaped the mortification of beholding her visiters of the morrow transferred into so many rotatory machines.

We may well conceive the vexations occasioned by this host of petty observances to those sturdy

veterans who were more conversant with the battle-field than the boudoir. Doubtless, however, the ridicule which has attached to the manners of Napoleon's court has been greatly exaggerated, and from evident design, in writings published by renegade courtiers since the restoration. We have Josephine's own authority, whose judgment and taste are indisputable, that the emperor himself, from the first, observed with ease the habitudes of his rank. "Most certainly," such are her own words when conversing in the little circle of her own exiled court, "most truly do I regard the emperor as a man who has no equal. In camps, at the council-board, they find him extraordinary, but in the interior of his palace he ever appeared to me still more remarkable. I confess that, notwithstanding my experience of the world and its usages, the commencement of the imperial forms embarrassed me. The emperor, on the contrary, made a sport, a pleasure of them, and in all the palace he alone, beyond contradiction, best understood their observances. Lannes, who enjoyed full license of speech, made mockery of what he termed 'the hypocrisies of political worship;' but, estimating such things at their real value, the emperor regards them under relations more elevated, and conceives that, in the eyes of the people, they conduce to restore to power the majesty and ascendency which so many years of anarchy had destroyed. He grants, in truth, that their principal influence springs from the personal qualities of those invested with the supreme rule; but he maintains, that, without equalling or superseding these qualities, ceremonial institutions may supply their place with advantage. In supporting such a system, Napoleon shows himself at least very disinterested, for who can stand less in need of appliances to impose upon men than one who seems born to govern? In proof of his argument he adduces the example of a crowd of princes who have reigned, so to speak, rather

seated or lying than standing upright, but whose couch, guarded by the barriers of etiquette, has been respected like a sanctuary.

"Of these views," added Josephine, "I did not altogether approve, but submitted to them;" and indeed her whole conduct showed, that whatever tended to substitute form for sentiment, or place restraint upon intercourse with those around her, gave pain. Her elevation so far tended to her unhappiness, that it placed in solitary greatness, above the kindly glow of equal affections, a heart "whose first desire was to be loved." In this sense she might have said,—

> Never did subject long to be a queen
> As I do long and wish to be a subject.

At the commencement of the empire, the etiquette of which she chiefly complained was that which obliged her to remain seated while she received those who had lately been her equals, or even her superiors, in rank. Nothing could be more amiable than her reception of those ladies who came to take the oaths of fidelity on receiving appointments in the imperial household. She took care to remove all ostentatious ceremony—was usually accompanied only by her first lady of honour—talked to the neophyte, who was often an old acquaintance, of their former intimacy, or on such topics as might render less sensible the difference between their present station, and make the whole pass as an agreement between two friends to love each other. This condescension extended even to her humble domestics, yet never degenerated into undignified familiarity or absence of self-possession, as the following little incident testifies:—On the very first occasion of her leaving St. Cloud for a distant excursion as empress, Josephine traversed a whole suite of apartments, though pressed for time, to give directions to a very subaltern person of her household.

On returning, the grand steward remonstrated very respectfully on thus compromising the dignity of the crown, and that her majesty should give orders through him. The empress upon this gayly replied, "You are quite right, my good sir, and such neglect of etiquette might be altogether inexcusable in a princess born to a throne and trained to the restraints which it imposes; but have the goodness to recollect that I have enjoyed the felicity of living so many years as a private individual, and do not take it amiss if I sometimes venture to speak kindly to my servants without an interpreter."

The first steps towards empire, we have seen, were effected amid conspiracies, imprisonments, and the murder of a prince. Some of its earliest acts were marked by Josephine's humane exertions in favour of the accused. The trials of those implicated in the conspiracy of Georges and Pichegru terminated only in June. Of the principal conspirators, all who were saved by a commutation of capital punishment owed their lives chiefly to her intercession. They were the Prince Polignac, MM. de Lozier, Rusillon, Rochelle, d'Hozier, de Rivière, and General Lajollais. The female relatives of these unfortunate men were the mediators who obtained access to the empress, mainly through Madame de Montesson, and were thus placed in Napoleon's way; for Josephine, with excellent knowledge of his dispositions, which rendered him most susceptible to impulses of unpremeditated feeling, called in this resource in aid of her own application. The intercessor for the Polignacs was their aunt, Madame de la Tour; and it speaks powerfully in favour of the empress, that one, though moving formerly in the highest circles, then reduced to needlework for support, could still, in the cause of humanity, command a ready entrance to the Tuileries. This reminds us of an offering presented to Josephine, on her first imperial birthday, consisting of a table of

white marble, decorated with paintings of flowers, by Madame de Montesson,—an art in which she excelled,—and various elegant fancy works, by the ladies of her domestic circle. The latter were chiefly embroidered by Madame de la Tour and her daughter, who had worked almost night and day, thus to express their grateful sense of the empress's humane condescension. This gift, pleasing at once from its simplicity and its motives, was soon afterward, on the birthday of the giver, acknowledged by the present of two beautiful vases, from the imperial manufactory of Sèvres, accompanied by the following note:—

*The Empress to Madame de Montesson, ci-devant Dutchess of Orleans.*

"Being prevented from offering in person my good wishes on this day, I console myself, *dear maman*, in the assurance, that you give me credit for their sincerity. I send you two vases, which will recall me to your remembrance, though the flowers upon them are far from being so beautiful as those painted by your hand upon my charming table of white marble. I value it as every thing deserves to be valued that comes from you, and request you again to accept my thanks. Marshal Berthier tells me he dines with you to-day. He loves you; and on that account have I commissioned him to repeat, in my name, how much I regret not being able to follow my own inclination, which would quite naturally lead me to Romainville, to join your family and numerous friends, at the head of whom I have the presumption to place myself, though I can but so rarely enjoy my share of the pleasure which they derive from a conversation agreeable to all, instructive and useful to most.

"The poor woman whom you recommended to me is satisfied with a small appointment for her son.

It will afford time for something better. Be assured, I will not forget them. Present my thanks to the ladies of your circle, for the beautiful works I received from them. It is decided, that every one who approaches you shall possess some perfection. Why, then, am I so far distant? Adieu, *dear mamma*. Love me, and let me ever have your advice: for it is very difficult to fill the place which I occupy to the satisfaction of all,—and that is what I wish."

The reader is already aware, that Madame de Montesson was the widow of the Duke of Orleans, and, consequently, mother-in-law to his present majesty, Louis Philippe. At this period, she resided at the villa of Romainville, on a pension of six thousand guineas, granted by Napoleon, with whom she was a great favourite, from having crowned him with the mathematical laurel at Brienne, and was often visited in this retreat by his wife and sisters, her acquaintance constituting, in some measure, the medium of intercourse between the old and new courtiers. She died in 1806, at the age of sixty-eight.* Strange are the vicissitudes of human affairs!—a Dutchess of Orleans pensioned by Bonaparte, and Josephine interceding for a life under the empire, which twenty-six years afterward was to be forfeited again,—and under the reign of a Bourbon! Another of these rescued captives, destined, like Polignac, to play a conspicuous part in the present times, was the Marquis de Rivière, who, raised to a dukedom by Charles X., and made preceptor to the young Duke of Bordeaux, died in 1828, and thus escaped the grief of following his sovereign a second time into exile. The sister of De Rivière had implored the protection of the empress:—"To your brother," said the latter, "attaches the importance of a leader in this unhappy affair. It were

* See *Memoir of Bourrienne*, prefixed to the 2d edition of the translation of his work, in Constable's Miscellany.

well, therefore, he himself wrote to the emperor, that so my application might with more reason be granted."—"Alas! your majesty does not know my brother. He will not write, nor dare I even propose it."—"Well, then," replied the good Josephine, "we must try to save him, even in spite of himself." It may give some idea of the perfect self-possession of these men, that De Rivière, on the day of his trial, observing the beautiful Dutchess of La Force among the crowd of rank and talent which daily filled the court during these famous proceedings, addressed her in the following impromptu, turning on the names of the principal places of durance in Paris:—

> In prison is one ill or well?
> Ill, ill, as sad examples tell.
> The *Bureau Central* fills with fear.
> The *Temple's* towers are chill and drear,
> The *Abbey's* dungeons are still worse;
> But blest 's the captive of *La Force!*

It might be said, that those of the condemned now mentioned belonged to the noblest families in France, consequently could command powerful intercession, while there existed an interest and political advantages to be served by interceding. The following incident, however, shows that Josephine's ear was open to every appeal for mercy. The circumstances, also, are the more important to be known, that Bourrienne, usually so correct, has described Lajollais as an agent of the police, and pardoned on that account. With his usual candour, indeed, he acknowledged his mistake in a short note to one of his later volumes, having subsequently obtained more correct information, in all probability from the same authority as we now quote. One morning a child (for she did not exceed thirteen years of age) arrived at St. Cloud, entreating to see the empress, on a matter of life and death. Though not yet five o'clock, the attendants did not hesitate

to inform their mistress, knowing she might forgive being disturbed, but would not overlook inhumanity. The petitioner was the daughter of General Lajollais, who, without informing any one, had left the relations under whose protection she had been residing in Paris, her mother likewise being in prison as an accomplice; and thus, alone, friendless, and unknown, had come to cast herself at the empress's feet, to supplicate for a father's life. A privy council was to assemble exactly at five that same morning. Josephine directed the weeping girl to be concealed near the saloon through which Napoleon must necessarily pass on coming from the council chamber. In behalf of Lajollais, who, though cleared by a court-martial, had still remained under suspicion, from connexion with the events of the 18th Fructidor, she had not even ventured to plead. The council continued to sit for twelve hours; the empress ordered refreshments to be carried to her protegée, and repeatedly went herself, accompanied by Hortense, endeavouring, in the kindest manner, to persuade her to take something; but in vain were the most tempting delicacies presented by her own hand; the poor child could think only of the dreadful situation of a father, whose immediate execution might be pronounced by the very council then sitting. At five o'clock in the afternoon it broke up: on a sign given by one stationed on purpose to point out the emperor to her, Mademoiselle Lajollais threw herself before Napoleon, and clasped his knees. A heart-rending scene ensued before his obduracy yielded; at last he relented so far as to say, "Well, your father shall not die." On hearing this, the poor supplicant fainted away; the emperor himself raised and consigned her to Josephine, who, after bestowing the most tender care on her recovery, dismissed her under protection of the brave Lavalette to announce this reprieve to her father. But on arriving at the dungeon, she found it impossible

to communicate this message of gladness; she could only sob upon her father's bosom; and General Lavalette informed the unhappy man through what mediation his life had been spared. By the same intercession Madame Lajollais was next morning restored to unconditional freedom.

Other attempts in the same humane cause were not attended by a like success; the empress vainly attempted to save Villeneuve and Coster St. Victor, whose chivalrous bearing had excited universal sympathy. Madame Coster, aunt of the former, and celebrated in the history of contemporary art for her paintings of flowers, hoping that Napoleon might be touched by the situation of a woman of talent, whose sole remaining stay rested on the life of her nephew, presented one of her finest works: the painting was admired and accepted by the emperor, but the application for the youth's pardon failed, though supported by the tears and entreaties of Josephine. It is certain, also, that she counselled lenity towards a far more illustrious captive than any yet mentioned, namely, Moreau. With the family of that celebrated commander, indeed, she had at one period been very intimate. Madame Moreau, formerly Mademoiselle Hulot, a Creole also, had been the particular friend of Josephine, and chiefly through her influence the marriage had been contracted. Bonaparte, too, has himself said, that, delighted with the amiable temper of his own wife, he had recommended to his brother-in-arms a connexion which he deemed to present similar inducements. "God knows," added he, "how I have been deceived." The mistake, however, was not discovered immediately; for some time the ancient friendship continued to subsist between the ladies, and even after the accession to that dignity, the best understanding prevailed for a space between Moreau and the First Consul. Of this the following incident may serve as an illustration:—One morning, while

the consul and the general were conversing, after having breakfasted together at the Tuileries, Carnot entered with a pair of pistols of great value, which the artisans in the royal manufactory at Versailles had commissioned him to present to Bonaparte. The latter received and handled them with much satisfaction, observing that they were really beautiful, and trustworthy where a valuable life was at stake; then, turning to his guest, he said, "Upon my word, general, they could not have come more opportunely; accept them from me." Moreau showed himself deeply touched by this frank but highly flattering mode of presenting a soldier's gift, and very warmly expressed his thanks. Various are the causes assigned for the interruption of this good understanding; such as the non-reception of Mesdames Hulot and Moreau at Malmaison after the battle of Hohenlinden. In this Josephine was certainly not to blame, for she did every thing in her power to efface the impression of this neglect, whether accidental or intended. By another account, the quarrel commenced exclusively among the ladies. During one of her frequent residences at the baths of Plombières, Josephine, on returning from a morning ride on horseback, was informed that Madame Moreau and her mother were in the drawing-room. Through this apartment, unfortunately, lay the only access to Madame Bonaparte's dressing-room. To none conversant with the mysteries of the toilet are the mischievous effects of the air and sun on a factitious complexion unknown. From consciousness, as the story goes, that after a long ride her face required renovation, Josephine passed rapidly through the saloon without noticing her visiters, and on her return they were gone.

**What dire mischiefs from slender causes spring!**

Hence the perpetual disunion of Napoleon and Moreau,—names, it has been alleged by the flatterers

of the latter, which the same hemisphere could not contain. We report these, and might transcribe other similar anecdotes, not as giving them credit in all the latitude of consequence ascribed to them, but as showing the general impression, that the jealousy and discontent of his wife and mother-in-law were the real causes of Moreau's separation from Bonaparte. To say that the latter looked with distrust upon the reputation of the former is an absurdity. "I envy him not, because I fear him not," was Napoleon's dispassionate estimate of the man; and it was a just one. Moreau deemed himself capable of undertaking a grand political part, and yet was he without political principle; a republican, or, at least, professing to be so, he suffered himself to be converted into a most active agent in the destruction of republican forms; he showed equally disposed to pull down the consulate, yet, as Bonaparte shrewdly remarked, had provided nothing to be substituted in its stead; even the royalists showed less folly. That he absolutely plotted with Georges there is no proof; but that he saw him twice is certain; and, after a public trial under these circumstances, and with the influence he still held over the minds of the soldiery, it was impossible for Napoleon to listen to other besides Josephine's intercession for Moreau. To pursue his future history is unnecessary: in America, he had leisure for the grovelling pleasures to which he was addicted; and the results of the battle of Dresden, which is understood to have been fought entirely according to his plans, show that his return thence was any thing but indispensable to the overthrow of his more fortunate rival. The times have passed away when it was the fashion to hold up the victor at Hohenlinden as the victim of patriotism at Dresden. On that field he appeared in the uniform, and in the pay, of Russia; with no consistency might he declare for the Bourbons; and the usurper could be reached only through

the bosom of his country. The hand, therefore, which from the monument erected on the scene of his fall erased the word *hero*, and deeply and legibly inscribed the word *traitor*, has written his true epitaph.

An explicit detail of Josephine's exertions in behalf of these unfortunate men has appeared the more necessary, both as they essentially belong to the marked events of her life, and as recent attempts have been made to take away the merit of these praiseworthy endeavours in the cause of her fellow-creatures. The pardons granted, writers have not only attributed to the representations of Murat, but have likewise accused the late Duke de Rivière of ungratefully forgetting his preserver in the hour of need, and hastening the catastrophe at Pizzo. Murat, indeed, like most of the real friends of Bonaparte, counselled him to mercy, and even to dismiss the prisoners, alleging, with truth, that such a proceeding would tend more to strengthen his newly established throne than the execution of all the conspirators in France. However just these general recommendations, we know they were treated with neglect; and so far from De Rivière causing the arrest of Murat in Corsica, the former did not arrive in that island until November, 1816, long after the death of the unfortunate ex-king of Naples, whom, on the contrary, meeting at Toulon, he earnestly advised to take shipping for Trieste, there to join the ex-queen Caroline.* The above recital, therefore, gives the real state of affairs; nor can any thing deprive Josephine of the honour of having signalized her accession to a diadem by so many acts of mercy.

The interval between the foundation of the empire and the coronation passed in the events and arrangements now discussed, and in an excursion of nearly

* *Memoires Posthumes de Duc de Rivière.* Paris, 1829.

three months through the Netherlands and along the German frontier. Immediately before setting out on this journey, the empress made her first grand appearance in that capacity, on the 14th of July, on the occasion of administering the new oath to the members of the Legion of Honour. How singularly are often the highest and least important concerns blended together! This, perhaps the most august, and when the means and effects of the institution are considered, certainly most imposing ceremony of the empire, was introduced by a dispute among the ladies of the empress, whether they should be in the morning or full dress. After due deliberation, this important discussion terminated in the resolution, that since the empress was to appear in grand costume, her attendants should be apparelled in mode conforming. This decision was unanimous, with the exception of Madame Lavalette, *dame d'atours*, or tire-woman, who, accordingly, made her appearance in a plain muslin robe. It is needless to describe the ceremonial which took place in the Church of the Invalids: a seat was prepared for the empress on Napoleon's right; eighteen hundred chevaliers of the order were presented; and on this its imperial regeneration, we might have expected in its author an elevation of mind correspondent to the dignity of his office. Napoleon returned from the ceremony to Josephine's apartments in the Tuileries, passing for the first time by the grand entrance through the gardens. He had scarcely entered, when, approaching the window, some boys in the garden set up a shout of "Long live the emperor!" Turning away, he exclaimed, with marked dissatisfaction, "I am the worst lodged sovereign in Europe. No one thinks of admitting the populace into one's very palace!" In this ill-humour he encountered Madame Lavalette and her unfortunate robe. Giving the train of the plain muslin gown a kick with his foot, he addressed the wearer, "Now fy upon it, madam,

what a dress is that! You show the worst possible taste!" The truth is, Josephine thought so too; she always insisted on choosing her own dresses, and Madame Lavalette was soon afterward superseded in her office of *dame d'atours*. As the evening advanced, the court adjourned to a balcony to enjoy more pleasantly the military music of a band stationed in the gardens below. Suddenly, in the middle of the concert, the emperor conceived a fancy to view the statues in the gallery of the Louvre by torchlight, and giving his arm to Josephine, proceeded through the gallery, attended by Baron Denon, the keeper, and followed by the whole brilliant assemblage. The effect must have been beautiful indeed; but Napoleon's attention rested chiefly upon the famous bust of Alexander,—the work of Praxiteles. Before this admirable work of art he stood for some time; but only to criticise. "Look at that head: fine as it certainly is, it must be wrong; observe how large the features; they are out of all proportion; for Alexander was a smaller man than I—much smaller." This latter remark he repeated more than once, seemingly delighted at the idea, that, though only five feet two, he was taller than the conqueror of Darius! So nearly is human greatness associated to the most inconceivable littleness.

Towards the end of July, Josephine set out on her tour, and Napoleon on the same day departed for Boulogne; it being arranged that they should meet at Aix la Chapelle. The frequent excursions made by the court formed a principal class of events in Josephine's life, as empress; they constituted those alternations which afforded her most pleasure: an outline of the present, therefore, one of the longest and not least interesting, and of which we have a daily journal kept by one of her attendant ladies, may prove acceptable, as exhibiting a picture of all.

While any of these imperial journeys was in contemplation, no one knew exactly the hour of

departure, or even the route to be followed. Every thing, indeed, down to the most minute circumstance, had been previously and unalterably determined, but nothing was communicated till the moment when it became absolutely necessary to issue orders. It generally happened, after an opera, a review, reception, or any event which had collected a number of people, that Napoleon, on retiring for the night, would say, in a careless mood, "We set out at such an hour," usually an early one, and instantly directions were transmitted to those in waiting. Against the appointed hour, rarely by any chance exceeded, every preparation had been completed, and the imperial travellers departed. The object of this secrecy, namely, to prevent conspiracies against his life, by first collecting at court those whom he might have to fear among his own partisans, and next retaining in uncertainty distant enemies, was certainly attained, but at considerable expense of comfort and convenience. The night previous to a departure, scarcely an eye was closed in the palace; most of those who held offices near the person of the emperor or empress, and who were named to attend them, could hardly of course retire to rest, being busied in preparation; while others might "go to bed, but not to sleep," such was the noise of trunks and carriages, domestics and guards assembling.—In the next place, the useless expenditure was considerable; from the moment an imperial progress was talked of, it behooved to send out, on diverse roads, the requisite necessaries and attendants, where they remained for weeks, frequently for a month; and were only called in after it had been decided by his departure in what direction the emperor would travel.

Nothing could be more melancholy than the aspect of the palace, lately so brilliant, after the departure of the emperor. But in this general expression of desolateness might be remarked a distinct character,

according with the cause of absence. If Napoleon had gone on a tour of pleasure, a figure might be perceived here and there stealing about, engaged in the quiet duties of official attendance, or preparing to enjoy the master's absence in a brief interval of liberty, beyond the imprisoned atmosphere of a court. If he had departed on a warlike expedition, the court still boasted its female ornaments; but its gayety had fled. Next morning, ladies only were seen gliding about like spectres, pale with watching and weeping over their separation from brothers, fathers, husbands, and sons. Every day augmented the sadness, for as these loved relatives approached the scene of conflict, each feared to accost her companion, lest she might impart or obtain the mournful intelligence too certainly awaiting some. No wonder, then, setting apart her affection, that Josephine on all occasions evinced so strong a desire to be permitted to accompany her husband. On his part, Napoleon loved to indulge this wish; and they differed only as to its being always possible. On one occasion, however, after promising to take the empress, something having occurred to alter his intention, and to require speed, he resolved on departing privately, without his companion. Fixing, accordingly, one o'clock in the morning, the hour when she was most likely to be asleep, for the time of setting out, he was just about to step into the carriage, when Josephine, in most piteous plight, threw herself into his arms. By some means she had obtained information of what was going forward, and called her women; but, impatient of any delay, had got up without waiting for them, and throwing about her the first drapery she could lay hands upon, had rushed down-stairs, in slippers, without stockings, "weeping," as our authority, an eyewitness, expresses it, "like a little girl when the holydays are over." A moment later, and Napoleon would have been off like lightning, but he could rarely withstand

the tears of his wife, so, placing her along the bottom of the carriage, he covered her with his travelling pelisse, giving orders himself about the clothes and proper attendants of the empress.

When Josephine, as in the instance we are now describing, journeyed alone, which was not often, her retinue consisted of the first lady of the court, la dame d'honneur, who was her ancient friend, Madame la Comtesse de Rochefoucauld, four ladies in waiting, a grand chamberlain and chamberlain, a grand equery, an equery, a secretary; making, with the commandant of the escort, and a chevalier d'honneur, a suite of twelve persons. The court was of course still more numerous when united, and the consequent attendants and luggage chiefly prevented Napoleon from always taking the empress with him. "I could sooner," he would say, "transport the whole artillery of a division of my grand army, than the bandboxes of Josephine's waiting-women." Every circumstance had been unalterably fixed in advance, the places where the empress was to stop, the routes to be followed, where she ought to address the authorities, or the reply she was to make to their harangues; the expenses were fixed, the very presents she was to give portioned out by express regulation. All this was set down in a huge manuscript volume, from which poor Josephine daily conned her lesson previously to every removal or ceremony.—In this "bondage of the spirit," however, she enjoyed an advantage over most others, had they been placed in her situation; if, in the multitude of these details, any thing escaped her memory, or required extemporaneous modification according to circumstances, her unpremeditated answers or arrangements were always delivered with so much eloquence and propriety, or marked such perfect kindness and condescension, that all parties were satisfied. Every evidence on this particular subject bears, that here she infinitely surpassed her successor, with whom she

is most naturally compared: sometimes, however, though very rarely, a little mistake was committed, as, on the present journey, when departing from Rheims, Josephine presented the mayoress with a medallion of malakite, set with diamonds, using the singular expression, "it is the colour of hope."—Some days afterward, on seeing this absurdity in one of the journals,* she could not believe having made use of it, and despatched a courier instantly to Napoleon, at Boulogne, fearing his displeasure above all things. This occasioned the famous mandate prohibiting all journalists from reporting any speech of the emperor or empress unless the same had previously appeared in the *Moniteur*.

Down to the most minute particulars, Josephine adhered to her *manuscript instructions*, as respected her own accommodations, with a scrupulosity that allowed nothing to be altered. "*He* has said it, and it must be right," was the constant observation with which she silenced all suggestions of change. On the present journey, for example, the emperor had appointed the route to Liege by a road through the forest of Ardennes. The construction of such a road had actually been ordered; but as yet existed only in his own pencil-mark on Josephine's travelling map, and in the merest preliminary operations of the engineer. The relays, as a matter of precaution, had been placed along the projected traverse; but it was represented that her majesty could not possibly attempt to pass. "We can at least try," said she to her little court; and pass they certainly did, but with the greatest difficulty, and even danger.—In many places, the country people and workmen had to support the carriages with ropes and poles to prevent an overset; on which occasions, though in the midst of a heavy rain, Josephine alighted, and walked on foot, ankle deep in mud and water. All

* *La Publiciste*.

this was endured, on her part, with the greatest cheerfulness—not so on that of her inferior attendants: thus the carriage of the first femme-de-chambre was actually overturned, and though her imperial mistress left a party of her own escort to attend, and otherwise bestowed every possible care upon the distressed serving-woman, nothing would satisfy the latter short of the whole court being detained by her mishap: and next day, on rejoining the circle, pouted sadly on this account. In fact, Josephine's perfect, or here, more properly speaking, excessive good-nature, exposed her to much vexation from the pretensions of her attendants. Each, indeed, displayed the utmost zeal in her service; but, among themselves, all had different interests, jealousies, and rights, clashing with those of their fellows, which, coming in the shape of complaints, the empress, by endeavouring to reconcile, instead of instantly repressing, only made worse. Matters at length attained such a pass, during the present journey, that Madame Rochefoucauld so lectured the empress on this weak condescension, as to leave her in tears. Time rendered Josephine more cautious; but, from the same facility of character, a similar disorder continued more or less to prevail.

During an excursion, nothing could be more amiable than the conduct of Josephine towards the ladies of her court; she seemed to study opportunities of showing those attentions to their feelings and tastes which cost so little, and yet go so far in winning a way to the heart. Being always attended by persons well acquainted with the country, and ever anxious to glean information,—for, as has been well, though somewhat maliciously, observed, what she knew was chiefly from conversation,—her discourse, while travelling, turned almost entirely upon the scenes through which they were passing. When a remark thus occurred more than usually instructive or amusing, especially if connected with the families

of any of her ladies or their past fortunes, she never failed to send information of the same by a special messenger, who had instructions to point out the particular place, and to relate the circumstances.—All this kindness received an additional charm from the unostentatious simplicity with which it was offered; every thing passed as if among a party of equals on an excursion of pleasure, each bound to supply a modicum to the common fund of enjoyment. Every thing like vain etiquette was laid aside; even external forms were dispensed with, whenever it appeared they could be omitted with propriety. Of this a curious instance occurred some time after the arrival of the empress at Aix la Chapelle, where she was to remain to take the baths. One evening when her ladies seemed to be more than usually under the influence of ennui, Josephine kindly set on foot inquiries whether there might not be some novelty which they had not yet seen. Information was brought of a wonderful model of Paris, which the court had not yet visited. Josephine proposed immediately to rectify this omission; her ladies were of the same mind, and M. d'Harville, the chevalier d'honneur, was about to issue the necessary orders for the imperial carriages and cortège: "Softly, my good sir; suffer us for once to prove our own locomotive powers, and trust to the humane dispositions of the good citizens of Aix la Chapelle." —"Walk on foot—your majesty walk on foot!—impossible!" and the chevalier d'honneur manifested all the necessary horror at such a breach of imperial decorum. "Walk on foot! delightful!" cried the ladies; and, as usual, the ladies had their own way. This movement being totally unexpected, the streets were almost clear, and the party reached their destination unmolested; but the intelligence having quickly spread, they found, on attempting to return, that the town was illuminated, and every street thronged with multitudes. The ladies drew back

from encountering such a passage, and it was proposed to send for the carriages and escort. Josephine would not hear of this: "Were any accident thus to happen to the people whom our imprudence has assembled, I never could forgive myself;" and giving her hand to the Count d'Harville, she boldly ventured among the crowd, followed by her ladies, each similarly attended by a nobleman of the court. The populace respectfully made way; and though the plumes and diamonds of the courtiers formed a strange contrast with the accessories of a mob, Josephine reached her residence without the slightest annoyance. Once more in the saloon, with the members of her little court, she thanked M. d'Harville, and frankly confessed, that, in not following his advice in the first instance, she had committed a folly, which, though perfectly harmless in itself, might have been attended with serious consequences.

When Josephine travelled alone, she often breakfasted according to circumstances, sometimes in the open air, under the shade of a tree, or in a station overlooking a fine prospect, and always without ceremony. At dinner, the ladies and grand officers of the court sat down to table with the empress; the commanding officer of the escort, the colonel of the guard of honour appointed in all the cities where the court remained, and the prefect of the department had likewise regularly invitations. Occasional guests depended on circumstances, but officers of such rank or merit as authorized that distinction always received invitations, and to these, especially if old in the service, Josephine showed herself particularly attentive. On the present journey, however, even this condescension was turned against her. An old and infirm officer of rank had been introduced, and, unaccustomed to the usages of a court, had sat down in the drawing-room on the same sofa beside the empress. Josephine was too good-natured to hurt the feelings of a brave veteran by reminding him of

the impropriety of such a situation, and of course no one else presuming to do so, this trifling affair seemed to have passed without remark. Not so: in the secret report transmitted to Napoleon, by those who were no friends to the empress, the matter was not only detailed, but, for evident reasons, placed to the account of General Lorges, the young and handsome commandant at Aix la Chapelle. Napoleon stormed; Josephine, without condescending to understand the covert insinuation of the charge, mildly stated the facts, and fortunately they had been observed by others.

Napoleon rejoined the empress on the 19th of August. "He is arrived," thus writes the journalist, "and with him espionage; the anxieties and suspicions which form his constant attendants have already banished the gayety and freedom of our little circle. His return has already proved, that of us twelve appointed to constitute her *honourable* suite, one plays the part of a spy on the empress. Napoleon, on arriving, showed that he was perfectly acquainted with all our movements; and we discovered, too, that the best construction had not always been put on our actions." Upon this occasion came to light the story of the old officer just related, as a single instance of the numerous accusations of a similar nature to which the empress was exposed. In such cases, the very simplicity of Josephine's character supplied her best safeguard. Instead of a clamorous defence or vindication, her practice was to give the simple facts, leaving these to make their own way; the subsequent inquiries instituted by Napoleon rarely failed to corroborate these, and his own feelings did justice to his wife. He was always kindest after one of these causeless outbreakings, as if his heart smote him for offending against so much gentleness.

But if, after the emperor's arrival, the court lost some of its happy freedom from suspicion and re-

straint, it gained much in brilliancy,—the princes of the Rhenish Confederation hastening in crowds to pay homage to the new sovereign so soon to be their protector. The pageants, however, and presentations consequent upon these occasions, as exhibiting little that is characteristic in our present subject, may be omitted. The imperial travellers remained together for some time at the waters, and afterward passed by Cologne and Mayence to Paris. The attendance of the German princes was particularly numerous at the two former places. Before quitting Aix la Chapelle a little incident occurred to Josephine, which might be considered curious were not contrivance too obviously visible. In the cathedral of that city are preserved the relics which were presented to Charlemagne by the Empress Irene.—These precious antiquities are deposited in an iron cabinet which is built into the wall, and are exhibited only once in seven years. The septennial era had not yet arrived, but an imperial request appeared sufficient reason for a change in the calendar,—the wall was pulled down, and the treasures, such as they were, exposed. Among other articles was a small coffer of gilt silver, which attracted particular attention from the statement of the priests, that, by a most ancient tradition, grandeur and happiness were predicted to the person who should open it, but that hitherto every one had failed in the attempt. Josephine, whose curiosity was excited, took the coffer in her hand, and almost immediately after it flew open. This was considered as very extraordinary, for no traces of a lock or spring could be discovered, and, when the box was again shut, it could be opened by no one else. There can be little doubt, however, that the whole was a contrivance of the priests; and Josephine herself, much as she has been accused of superstition, attached no more importance to the circumstance than it deserved.

At Coblentz Napoleon and Josephine again sepa-

rated, the former to reach Mayence by a new road which he had caused to be constructed along the bank of the Rhine, the latter to ascend the river by water. The voyage should have terminated by eleven o'clock of the second day, but the two yachts which carried the empress and her suite encountered a severe storm near Bingen, where they put up for the night, and on starting next day some confusion arose in the relays stationed to drag the flotilla against the stream. This, with Josephine's indisposition, caused a delay of four hours, and she arrived at Mayence only at three o'clock. This was precisely the hour which the emperor had appointed for his own entrée, and the inhabitants were thus reduced to choose between whom they would attend. The empress obtained "their most sweet voices;" and while the ramparts and quays overlooking the Rhine, crowded with an eager population, resounded with acclamations of "Long live the empress!" her lord was left to traverse empty streets, where the houses, shut up and deserted, sent forth not a single voice to say "God bless him!" In this guise his carriage arrived in the court of the palace, at the same instant Josephine appeared at the opposite entrance, surrounded by the authorities, and accompanied seemingly by all of man, woman, and child contained in Mayence. This was beyond endurance—at least beyond Napoleon's; so giving one short pettish nod, he turned on his heel and shut himself up in his apartment. The court was informed that the emperor and empress would dine alone. Seven, the usual hour—eight—nine o'clock passed, and no invitation to the wonderstruck courtiers to rejoin the circle in the drawing-room. At length the summons arrived; but, on entering, they found nobody. A few minutes after they beheld Napoleon leave Josephine's apartments and retire to his own, favouring them with his usual curt salutation of ill-humour as he crossed the saloon. The first lady of

honour then entered to Josephine. She was in tears, and extremely unwell. She had endured for hours a scene of violence and outrage, Bonaparte accusing her of having intentionally retarded her arrival in order to interfere with his entrance, reproaching her with a systematic design of captivating the suffrages of the public. Could any proceeding be more cruel, mean, or unreasonable?

This happened on the 14th of September. On the 16th was to be a grand reception of the German princes, and among them those of the house of Baden, who afterward became relations of the empress, by the marriage of her niece, Stephanie de Beauharnais, with the hereditary prince, at this time a youth of some twenty years. On the same occasion she encountered also the sister of the same house, the young Princess of Baden, the rival proposed by Talleyrand. Never was a triumph more complete. The courtiers had expected with impatience this princess, of whose boasted charms they had heard so much. Their astonishment may be conceived on comparing a rude, ungainly girl with their elegant and accomplished mistress. They could perceive, too, that the contrast was not lost on Napoleon; and never did Josephine show more of grace and winning condescension than in the reception of the Princess of Baden. "It is so easy," remarks a lady of the court, "to be kind when one is happy—to be condescending when one is superior." The occasion, however, was not without its chagrins to Josephine; and, but for her own firmness, might have ended in a marked slight upon her beloved Eugene, who had attended his father-in-law from Boulogne. On receiving the programme of the order for the presentations, she found Eugene's name omitted, and, quite naturally, spoke to her husband on this subject. Napoleon, though really attached to young Beauharnais, yet, piqued at being in fault as to a point of etiquette, persisted in the exclusion.

Josephine, so passive to his will where her own interests or feelings were the sacrifice, was not to be moved when those of her children depended on her resolution: "I did not weep," said she to Napoleon, alluding to the importunities of his sisters, "to be made a princess; but, while I am one, mine shall be treated as the son of an empress." She kept her word; and, notwithstanding some manœuvring on the part of Talleyrand, to whom the original slight is perhaps to be attributed, did actually herself present Eugene. But she had not finished with the Princesses of Baden. Next evening, on taking them with her to the opera, the empress observed that they had come without shawls, and with her usual good-nature put one of her own round each. The day following, after taking leave, the elder princess sent a note, couched in flattering terms, that they would keep the shawls in remembrance of her. Josephine was but half-reconciled. The shawls were two of her *white cashmeres*.

These were mortifications; but, generally speaking, Napoleon, save on a day of battle, was never in better humour, or rendered others around him more happy, than when on a journey. Of the present Josephine always made mention as one of the most agreeable excursions they ever made together. The early mornings, where required, the emperor passed in reviewing the troops stationed along his route. On this subject, the following passage from the journal is worth extracting:—"One thing I had formerly remarked, but more particularly during the present journey, namely, the mistake under which the world laboured respecting Napoleon. The vulgar belief is, that he almost never sleeps, and works constantly; but I see that if he rise early to inspect his regiments, he takes good care to make up for it at night. Yesterday, for instance, he got on horseback exactly at five for a review, but in the evening he retired at nine, and Josephine told us he had

gone to bed. As to his immoderate use of coffee, again, in order to keep off sleep,—he takes one cup after breakfast, and another after dinner. But it is ever thus with the public: when an individual, placed in fortunate circumstances, is enabled to accomplish great things, mankind instantly convert these into marvels, and place them to the account of genius."

When nothing serious, as a review, or a reception of the municipal authorities, engaged the mornings, breakfast was often served in the open air, frequently at a distance, in some verdant spot on the banks, or on some of the numerous islands of the Rhine. On one of these occasions, while at breakfast on an island near Mayence, Napoleon observed a poor woman looking wistfully upon a spectacle which must have appeared to her so new and splendid. Calling one of the attendants who spoke German, he desired the woman to be brought near, and asked, "If she had ever dreamed she was rich?" After considerable difficulty in comprehending the question, she replied, "I have often thought that the person who possessed five hundred florins would be the richest in the world."*—"Her dream is a little too dear," said the emperor; "but it matters not—we must realize it;" so, collecting all the money among the courtiers, the sum was counted to the poor woman, who almost lost her wits at the sight of so much gold. "I looked at the emperor," says our authority, "deeming that he must be happy in the power of bestowing happiness; but no—his countenance expressed only displeasure."—"I have twice," said he, "asked the same question; but the dreams upon these occasions were more moderate,—this honest woman is ambitious." The same

* Fifty-four pounds five shillings and fourpence sterling. The florin at Mayence is two shillings and fourpence, but it varies from two shillings to one shilling and sixpence. Originally it was an Italian coin, though now exclusively used in Germany and the Netherlands.

morning, after breakfast, Josephine, accompanied by only one of her ladies and two attendants, while walking round the island, found a woman seated on the ground, suckling her child. Though, from her habiliments, it was easy to perceive that the mother belonged to the humblest rank of peasantry, she yet seemed happy and contented. Josephine stopped, took the child in her arms, and, with her caresses, a tear of tenderness, perhaps of regret, fell upon its innocent countenance. The infant held up its little hands, and smiled upon the empress. Her emotion was very evident; and, privately placing in the mother's hand five twenty-franc pieces, the whole contents of her purse, she silently turned away, amid grateful benedictions. On returning from a scene where his ostentation had thus been placed in unfavourable contrast with Josephine's unpretending beneficence, Napoleon talked a great deal on the relative condition of mankind, and on this occasion gave his famous, but somewhat incomprehensible, definition of happiness in the following terms:—"There is no such thing as happiness or misery in the world; the sole distinction is, that the life of the happy man is a picture with a silver ground, studded with stars of jet; while, on the other hand, the life of the unfortunate man is a dark ground with a few stars of silver."

Another occupation of the morning, more frequently attended to than any other during these excursions, was the reception of the constituted authorities of the cities and departments through which the court passed. For this duty Napoleon prepared with great diligence. A statistic of the whole of France, drawn up separately and privately by natives of the respective places, had been transmitted directly to himself. These reports he preserved for his own private use; thence he knew perfectly the state of any portion of his empire, and took care previously to consider the particulars upon which it

was the intention to examine its magistrates. By these means, chiefly, he contrived to acquire and maintain the reputation for almost universal knowledge, which he certainly enjoyed. Often, for instance, would the magistrates, after one of these audiences, proclaim his praises in terms like the following: "What a man!—how profound his knowledge!—no particular escapes him!—how universal his genius! Why, this remote department is as well known to him as if he had been born among us!" Doubtless, had the mode of acquisition been divulged, the admiration would have been diminished; but we question whether either its merit or utility would have been lessened. The views of the sovereign were thus kept abreast of the flow of national prosperity, and inferior agents constrained to an understanding of their functions; for if not answering correctly and aptly, they were dismissed, as happened in more than one instance during the present excursion.

The evenings, during a tour, were reserved entirely for amusement and conversation. Of this latter, when in good-humour, Napoleon supported the principal part; and, if we may believe Josephine, he conversed delightfully. Sometimes he would discuss a metaphysical question with Cambacérés, a great adept in ethical science, but with whom, from the latter's admiration of Kant, he seldom agreed. Much more frequently, however, he addressed his discourse to the members of the court generally, assembled in the saloon. At such times, half-recumbent on a sofa, with one foot resting on the floor, the other swinging to and fro, he would usually take for the subject one of the fine arts, especially music or painting; but a very common, and with him apparently a favourite, theme was love. So far as he was accustomed to illustrate his remarks by real anecdotes, or by fictitious narratives, he possessed complete mastery over the feelings and at-

tention of his hearers; then his recital became beautiful and powerful acting, in expression, gesture, language equalling the finest exhibitions of the drama. The tale of Julio, as found in Bourrienne,* which was actually recited during the present excursion, may serve to remind the reader of the power of these extemporaneous illustrations. In simplicity and tenderness of natural sentiment, however, Napoleon's views of the "great passion" were extremely defective; the delicacy and nobleness of the female character he, in fact, never appreciated, and appears not to have understood. "There are," said Josephine, with great simplicity, "perhaps five or six days in the year when woman may obtain some influence over him; but his opinion of our sex generally is extremely unfavourable." As the evening advanced—for he delighted to converse in the gloom of twilight—a game at whist usually concluded the drawing-room service, and the courtiers retired to lodgings assigned them under the same roof, or in the adjacent houses. The whist party consisted of the emperor and empress, Madame la Rochefoucauld, the lady of honour, with a fourth named either from the nobility of the court or the foreign visiters. Napoleon played very ill, and was so careless about this game, that, having once commissioned M. de Remusat, grand-chamberlain, to invite a lady to make a fourth, who pleading in apology that she had never played whist, he cried out, overhearing the excuse, "Oh madame, c'est égal"—that makes no matter. The lady, looking upon this as a command, took her seat, and, by barely attending to the first hand, beat the emperor. Josephine played well, but with no great liking for the amusement.

Such, with but some variety of scenery and incident, were all those excursions which filled up so large a portion of the imperial life of Josephine

* See Memoirs of Napoleon, *Constable's Miscellany*, vol. iii. 2d edit.

We have therefore dwelt upon the present one at some length. The court returned to Paris in the beginning of October. It is singular that this should have been precisely the same route which was taken in the first excursion which Napoleon made with Maria Louisa; and one who accompanied both has left on record, that the remembrance of the first was not obliterated in the hearts of the people by the visit of the second empress.

Meanwhile, preparations had been making for a coronation such as France had scarcely witnessed since the days of the Carlovingian monarchs, when the head of the Catholic church placed the crown upon the brow of her eldest son. To this honour and to this title Bonaparte, as founder of a dynasty, aspired anew. Nor was the church in any case to disallow these pretensions to one already in a fair way to make good his resolution of dethroning all the kings of Europe, that so he might be the senior of the regal aristocracy. The general veneration which the good old Pius awakened on his arrival in Paris became, in Josephine's breast, a deep and particular regard. During the five months nearly which he passed in the French capital, the unceasing cares of the empress were directed to whatever might tend to his comfort. Every day she sent to inquire concerning his welfare, often visited, and very frequently corresponded with his holiness. These attentions were the more called for, that the delicate health of Pius suffered from the climate of France, while the winter of 1804–5 was one of unusual severity. The orders of the emperor, indeed, provided amply for all things necessary; but the observant delicacy of the empress supplied many wants which might else have been overlooked. Often, for instance, the weather prevented the pope from appearing in public; a circumstance which grieved him chiefly as hindering the religiously inclined from approaching his person. Josephine procured the long picture gallery of the

Louvre to be thrown open; here the venerable Pius took exercise, and saw those who desired spiritual consolation from him. It was a sight deeply affecting to view the old man slowly pacing this magnificent gallery, nearly a quarter of a mile long, between a double line of kneeling applicants for his blessing; but to the sincere friend of religion, of whatever creed, it must have been painful to remark —a cause of regret still existing in France—that of these numbers almost all were women or children. His holiness was preceded by the director of the museum, the Baron Denon, and followed by the cardinals and officers of the papal court. The director named those to be personally introduced, and it was not without interest to behold the same aged hand now stretched forth to a supplicant who might perchance be announced by one of the most illustrious titles in France, and immediately after placed upon the head of an infant of nameless birth.

Pius was sincerely attached to Josephine: the peaceful mildness of their general characters was not dissimilar, while their firmness on certain points entirely redeemed this gentle endurance of personal wrongs and sacrifices from the charge of feebleness, which has sometimes been brought against both. The following letter, written a short time before the coronation, is the production of no weak or ill-regulated mind, and expresses sentiments, apart from a peculiar creed, equally just and affecting:—

*The Empress to his holiness Pius VII.*

"Whatever experience of human change the knowledge of our religion may have taught, your holiness will view, doubtless not without astonishment, an obscure woman ready to receive from your hands the first among the crowns of Europe. In an event so far beyond the ordinary course, she recognises and blesses the work of the Almighty,

without daring to inquire into his purposes. But, holy father, I should be still ungrateful, even while I magnified the power of God, if I poured not out my soul into the paternal bosom of him who has been chosen to represent his providence—if I confided not to you my secret thoughts. The first and chief of these is the conviction of my own weakness and incapacity. Of myself I can do nothing, or, to speak more correctly, the little I can do is derived solely from the extraordinary man with whom my lot is cast. This falling back upon myself, by which I am sometimes cast down, serves, upon more mature reflection, to encourage me. I say in my own heart, is not the arm which causes the earth to tremble amply sufficient to sustain me? But how many are the difficulties which surround the station to which that arm has raised me! I do not speak of the corruption which, in the midst of greatness, has tainted the purest minds; I can rely upon my own, so far as in this respect not to fear elevation. But from a height whence all other dignities must appear mean, how shall I distinguish real poverty? Ah! truly do I feel that, in becoming Empress of the French, I ought also to become to them as a mother: at the same time, what would it avail to bear them in my heart, if I proved my affection for them only by my intentions? Deeds are what the people have a right to demand from those who govern them; and your holiness, who so well replies to the respectful love of your subjects by continual acts of justice and benevolence, more than any other sovereign, is qualified to instruct me by example in the efficacy of this doctrine. Oh, then, holy father! may you, with the sacred unctions poured upon my head, not only awaken me to the truth of those precepts which my heart acknowledges, but also confirm the resolution of applying them to practice!"

The solemnity for which Josephine thus so prop-

erly endeavoured to prepare her mind took place on the 2d of December, 1804. But previous to a description of the ceremonial of the coronation, an important circumstance demands an explanation. The Duke de Rovigo, in his Memoirs, and after him other writers have asserted, that besides the mere civil act of marriage, no more sacred tie bound Napoleon to Josephine. The facts, however, are as follows:—Three days before the coronation, at midnight of the 29th and 30th of November, the nuptial benediction according to the forms of the church was pronounced over the imperial pair by Cardinal Fesch, in the private chapel of the Tuileries. This was deemed indispensable by the pope, and was done in consequence of his formal demand. Very few, indeed, witnessed the ceremony, but among these, it is pretty certain, were Marshal Duroc and Eugene, though neither, from the obvious circumstance of not having been called upon, has left personal testimony of his presence. Eugene, however, whose frank and noble character raised him far above suspicion, frequently stated, in the hearing of witnesses now living, certain knowledge of his mother's religious marriage having been celebrated as now related. The extract of this marriage, in fact, delivered to the empress by her own desire, was confided to her son's keeping, and was in his custody in Italy at the final downfall of the empire. From Josephine's own conversations, too, with intimate friends at Navarre and Malmaison after the divorce, the principal circumstance is placed beyond a doubt. True, the religious celebration of the marriage was not announced in the *Moniteur*, because Bonaparte objected to so tardy an act. Josephine acquiesced; and here the good sense which dictated silence to both, through her own devotion to his will, has, as we shall see hereafter, turned against herself. Besides, the institutions of the Catholic church, the character of the pope, a de

voted supporter of these, and the consequent improbability, if not actual impossibility, of the highest and most sacred ordinances of religion being administered by such hands to those who, strictly speaking, were not yet within the pale of ecclesiastical privileges, corroborate the fact of this private marriage.

On the 2d of December all was stir in Paris and the Tuileries from an early hour. On this morning, which was to witness the completion of her greatness, Josephine rose about eight o'clock, and immediately commenced the weighty concerns of the toilet. The body drapery of the empress was of white satin, beautifully embroidered in gold, and on the breast ornamented with diamonds. The mantle was of crimson velvet, lined with white satin and ermine, studded with golden bees, and confined by an aigrette of diamonds. The coronation jewels consisted of a crown, a diadem, and a ceinture. The first, used for the actual crowning, and worn only on state occasions, consisted of eight branches, four wrought in palm, and four in myrtle leaves of gold incrusted with diamonds: round the circlet ran a corded fillet set with eight very large emeralds; and the bandeau which immediately enclosed the head shone with resplendent amethysts. The diadem, worn before the coronation, and on the more ordinary state occasions, was composed of four rows of pearls of the finest water, interlaced with foliage of diamonds, the workmanship of which equalled the materials; in front were several brilliants, the largest weighing one hundred and forty-nine grains. The ceinture was of gold so pure as to be quite elastic, enriched with thirty-nine rose-coloured diamonds. What a change from the time of her first marriage, when, as Josephine, with her wonted simplicity, used to relate, she carried the few trinkets presented by Beauharnais, for several days, in the large pockets which ladies were then accustomed

to wear, showing them to every acquaintance, and hearing them pronounced the wonder of all eyes!

In Napoleon's apartment the morning passed in similar preparations. His close dress was of white velvet, embroidered in gold with diamond buttons; his stockings of white silk; the gussets wrought in gold, harmonized with buskins of white velvet laced and bordered with gold; his upper garment, as also the short mantle, were of crimson velvet, richly embroidered in gold, with diamond fastenings. This mantle was similar to that of the empress, but much heavier, weighing upwards of eighty pounds. It was curious to remark an innate parsimony amid all this profusion. As his attendants displayed them in succession, each of these magnificent habiliments gave occasion to new outpourings of indignation against embroidery, tailors, and *fournisseurs* of all descriptions. "All very fine that," he would say to his favourite valet, taking him at the same time by the ear; "all very fine, Monsieur le drôle; but we shall see the accounts!"

At eleven precisely the cavalcade moved from the Tuileries towards Notre Dame. The imperial carriage, drawn by eight bays, attracted general attention; it had been constructed for the occasion, in a very ingenious manner, the entire paneling being of glass, a circumstance which accounts for the mistake of their majesties having seated themselves, like criminals, with their backs to the horses; but where so many omens and predictions have figured, it is surprising that the fact has been omitted. Josephine was the first to discover this error, which she instantly rectified by lightly assuming the proper position, saying at the same time to her companion, "Mon ami, unless you prefer riding vis-à-vis, this is your seat," pointing to the rich cushion on the right. Napoleon, laughing heartily at his blunder, moved to the place indicated. The procession advanced, attended by ten thousand horsemen, the

flower of "Gallic chivalry," who defiled between double lines of infantry, selected from the bravest soldiers, extending above a mile and a half, while more than four hundred thousand spectators filled up every space whence a glance could be obtained. The thunders of innumerable artillery, the acclamations of the assembled multitude, expressed the general enthusiasm; and, as if to light up the gorgeous spectacle, the sun suddenly broke through the mists which till then had hung heavily over the city. The cortège stopped at the archiepiscopal palace, whence a temporary covered gallery, hung with the banners of the sixteen cohorts of the Legion of Honour, conducted into the interior of the cathedral, and to the throne. To this latter was an ascent of twenty-two semicircular steps, covered with blue cloth, gemmed with golden bees, and crowded with the grand officers of the empire. On the throne itself, hung with crimson velvet, under a canopy of the same, appeared Napoleon, with Josephine on his left, attended by the princesses of the empire, and on his right his two brothers, with the arch-chancellor and arch-treasurer. The religious ceremony continued nearly four hours, enlivened by music composed for the occasion chiefly by Paesiello, and sung by upwards of three hundred performers. The martial band was still more numerous, which executed in the intervals marches afterward adopted, and still used in the armies of France. One of these, composed by Le Seur, for the army destined to invade our own shores, when now performed for the first time, is said to have aroused a visible emotion even in that august assembly. Alas! how cold are the hearts that then beat high with hope! how few, how very few survive of those upon whom the impulse wrought most stirringly! and from the banks of the Tagus to the streams of the Volga, how varied the clime that settles on their graves! Yet not many years have passed—the

story is contemporary history—the grand actor might have been among us not an aged man. Be the moral, therefore, more impressively ours. Were all such thoughts of this life's greatness absent from Josephine's mind? It would appear not. Napoleon, at that part of the ceremony, stood up, laid his hand upon the imperial crown,—a simple diadem of gold wrought into a chaplet of interwoven oak and laurel,—and placed it on his head. He had even given express directions that Pius should not touch it. Popes had pretended that all crowns were bestowed by them; and perhaps the new emperor dreaded the belief that he had brought his holiness from Rome with reference to these ancient pretensions. He wished, therefore, to demonstrate, that the right to reign originated in his own power, and that, at his coronation, the pope was but the bishop of Rome. Afterward, Napoleon took the crown destined for the empress, and, first putting it for an instant on his own, placed it upon his consort's brow, as she knelt before him on the platform of the throne. The appearance of Josephine was at this moment most touching. Even then she had not forgotten that she was once "an obscure woman;" tears of deep emotion fell from her eyes; she remained for a space kneeling, with hands crossed upon her bosom, then, slowly and gracefully rising, fixed upon her husband a look of gratitude and tenderness. Napoleon returned the glance. It was a silent but conscious interchange of the hopes, the promises, and the memories of years!

Cardinal Fesch, as grand almoner of France, now placed the Gospels on the throne; Napoleon stood up, laid his hand on the sacred volume, and, in his deep and solemn tones, pronounced the oaths, with such firmness and elevation of voice, that each word was distinctly heard over the vast assembly. Shouts of "Long live the emperor! God bless the empress!" resounded through the cathedral, and were

caught and repeated by the multitude without; the organ pealed forth *Te Deum*, and the whole concluded. The cortège re-entered the palace at half-past six in the evening: Josephine retired to her closet to give vent in secret to the fulness of her heart, and to implore the protection of Him by whom kings reign. Napoleon too hastened to his apartments—"*Otez moi*," said he impatiently to his attendants—"*Otez moi ce genant attirail*"—Off, off with these confounded trappings;—and, casting his coronation robes from him, he resumed his simple uniform of a colonel of the guard, repeating incessantly, "*Enfin je respire*"—Now I breathe—and complaining that the preceding had been the most mortal four hours of his life.

The whole of December presented but a succession of *fêtes*. At that given on the 15th, by the city of Paris, when the empress entered the apartments destined for her temporary reception in the Hotel de Ville, she found a toilet service, with table, ewer, and basin, of massive gold, and exquisite workmanship, a present from the municipality of the capital. Another circumstance connected with this *fête* deserving of notice is the history of a balloon, which was launched in the evening, with lamps and iron framework, forming an imperial crown, weighing, exclusive of the balloon itself, 500 lbs. The vast globe rose majestically, hovering for some time over Paris, and presenting to the inhabitants a brilliant and vast diadem of light. The machine then disappeared in the south, and though a paper was attached, offering a reward to whomsoever should bring it back to the proprietor, the celebrated aëronaut Garnier, nothing was heard of it for fifteen days. On new-year's day morning, while Napoleon was dressing, one of the privy council entered. To the question, "What news?" the usual interrogatory to all his early visiters,—the minister replied, "Sir, I left the Cardinal Caprara very late last night, from

whom I learned the most extraordinary occurrence." "What is it?" said the emperor, preparing, half-dressed as he was, to conduct the narrator into the private cabinet. "Oh, sire," replied Maret, "the news is more curious than important,—Garnier's balloon, launched from Paris on the night of the 16th, fell near Rome on the evening of the 17th; thus bearing your imperial crown to the two capitals of the world within twenty-two hours!" This was actually the case, as appears from notices published at the time by Cardinal Gonsalvi, papal Secretary of State, and the Duke of Mondragone, near whose residence the balloon descended into the lake Bracciano, whence, after alarming the whole country far and near, it was brought to land by some fishermen. The machine had thus traversed nine hundred miles, across France, the Alps, and Italy, at the rate of forty-five miles an hour.

In April Josephine accompanied Napoleon to Milan, there to assume the crown of Lombardy. Before their departure was solemnized the baptism of Hortense's second son, Napoleon himself and Madame Mère being sponsors; the festivities were kept up till midnight, when the emperor, according to his usual fashion, merely said, on retiring, "Horses at six for Italy!" Leaving the empress at Fontainbleau, Napoleon made an excursion to Brienne, purposely, as emperor, to view the scenes of his boyhood, which he had not visited from the time of leaving college. The principal seat of his early studies, indeed, had been dismantled, but even revolutionary rage had been able to work little change on nature. Napoleon seemed to enjoy unmixed pleasure in recalling her features; walking before those who attended him, delighting to be the first to point out and name the several spots which had been his favourite resorts. After passing the night in the château de Brienne, he got up early in the morning to visit La Rothiere, formerly a holyday haunt, and

the cottage of dame Marguerite, a woman who lived in the forest, and at whose abode the collegians, in their rambles, were wont to be supplied with eggs, cakes, and milk. On such occasions each paid his share, and the good dame had not, it seems, forgotten, that regular payment might be depended on when young Napoleon was of the party. The emperor had inquired about the old woman overnight, and heard, with equal surprise and pleasure, that she still lived. Galloping almost alone through the alleys of the forest, he alighted at a little distance, and entered the cottage. "Good morning, dame Marguerite; so you have no curiosity to see the emperor?"—"Yes, indeed, good master, I am very anxious to see him, and here is a basketful of fresh eggs I am to carry to the château, and then I will try to get a sight of the emperor; I shall easily know him, for I have seen him often before now, when he came to taste my milk; he was not emperor then, but o' my troth, he knew how to manage his comrades; my milk, eggs, cakes, and broken plates, were sure to be paid for when he was present: he began by paying his own score, and saw that every one else paid."—"So, dame Marguerite," replied the emperor with a smile, "you have not then forgotten Bonaparte?"—"Nay, nay, my good master, people don't soon forget a young man of his stamp; we all remember that he was cautious, serious, and sometimes even melancholy, but always good to the poor. I am no great witch, but could have told that he would have made his way."—"He has done pretty well, has he not?" asked Napoleon, laughing.—"O' my troth, master, that he has," said the old woman, to whom Napoleon, during this short dialogue, had approached quite close, but keeping his back to the door, and consequently to the principal light. Turning now suddenly round, the light streamed full upon his countenance—the good dame started, blessed herself, and seemed striving to col-

lect her reminiscences of the past. To help her memory, Napoleon, rubbing his hands, and assuming the tones and manners of his youth, called out, "So, ho! dame Marguerite, some milk and fresh eggs; we are all dying of hunger." The old woman, not quite assured, began to examine the emperor very attentively. "Ah, dame Marguerite," said the latter, "time has changed us both; and you perceive it would not have been so easy as you just now thought to recognise the emperor; but you find we are old acquaintances." The poor creature dropped upon her knees—Napoleon raised her with an expression of the utmost kindness, saying, "Of a truth, my good mother, I am as hungry as a student—have you nothing to give me?" Eggs and milk were got ready, Napoleon helping himself, for joy had almost put the old woman beside herself. Having thus made a hearty repast, the emperor rose to depart, and giving his ancient hostess a purse of gold, said, "You know, dame Marguerite, I like everybody to pay their score.—Adieu, I will not forget you."

At Lyons, the imperial pair passed some days with Cardinal Fesch, whose hospitality, it has been remarked, became more bountiful in proportion to his certainty of remuneration. Josephine crossed Mount Cenis, partly in a litter, partly on foot; for the magnificent road which now "bridges the Alps" was then but just begun. For this passage, two beautiful sedans had been despatched from Turin, the one intended for the emperor being lined with crimson silk, with ornaments of gold, while Josephine's had lining of blue satin, and ornaments of silver. These elegancies, however, were used only when walking became dangerous; for Josephine preferred the support of Napoleon's arm, and the free aspect of the sublimities around. At Turin, or rather the palace of Stupinigi, in the vicinity of that beautiful little capital, she took leave of the venerable Pius, and these amiable personages parted with undi-

minished sentiments of mutual esteem. Josephine's gift on the occasion, a beautiful vase of Sèvres china, with exquisite paintings of the coronation, we have seen preserved in his holiness's palace on Monte Cavallo, as one would guard the memorial of some valued friend, long after she had ceased to reign and to live.

From Turin, the imperial party proceeded, by way of Alessandria, to the battle-plain of Marengo. Here about thirty thousand troops had been previously assembled, and a vast amphitheatre erected, whence, seated by Josephine's side, Napoleon distributed the cross of the Legion of Honour. Upon this occasion he had a hat with broad tarnished gold lace, a cloak already wormeaten, the large cavalry sabre of a republican general, and a blue coat with long skirts, the identical arms and habiliments worn on the "day of Marengo." Thence to Milan is only a short day's journey. It is unnecessary to describe the coronation here; the ceremony, except in being less magnificent, closely resembled that in Paris. Napoleon placed upon his brow, with his own hand, the iron circlet of the sovereigns of Lombardy, repeating aloud, "*Dio mi l' ha dato—guai a chi la tocca,*" —God hath given it—wo to the gainsayer;—and afterward crowned, in like manner, the empress. A few days after followed the ceremony of creating Eugene viceroy, and investing him with this new dignity. Their majesties remained nearly a month in the capital of Northern Italy. This period was one continued succession of fêtes. One day, when Josephine and Napoleon had escaped from greatness to a quiet breakfast and walk in a beautiful little island in the Olona, they met a poor woman, whose cabin stood near the spot where their table had been spread. "How do you live, my good woman?—are you married?—how many children have you?"—"Sir," answered the woman, not knowing who put these questions, "I am very poor, and have three

children, whom we have difficulty in bringing up, for my husband, who is a day-labourer, has not always work."—"Well, how much would make you perfectly happy?" asked Napoleon.—"Ah! sir, a great deal of money."—"Well, but once more, my good woman, how much would you wish?"—"Oh, sir, at least twenty louis" (about 16*l.*); "but what prospect is there of our ever having twenty louis?" The emperor ordered 3000 francs (125*l.*) in gold to be given her. The rouleaus being opened, and the contents poured into her lap, at the sight of such a quantity of gold, the poor woman nearly fainted away. "Ah! sir," said she, "ah! madam, it is a great deal too much—and yet you do not look as if you could sport with the feelings of a miserable woman." Josephine reassured her, saying, in the gentlest accents, "You can now rent a piece of ground, purchase a flock of goats, and, I hope, will be able to bring up your children comfortably."

Continuing their progress through the various departments of the new kingdom of Italy, the imperial travellers reached Mantua, and thence proceeded to Genoa. But if Napoleon's errand to Italy had been one of pleasure, his journey thence was urged by motives of equal speed and importance. At Genoa he received certain intelligence of the coming storm from the Austro-Russian coalition, mainly caused by his assumption of the Lombard crown. Josephine left Genoa with regret; she had been pleased with the people, the delightful climate, and the beautiful bay, in which a floating garden of orange-trees and rare plants was constructed for her amusement. She had resolved, however, to accompany the emperor, though suffering most severely from the rapidity of the journey. At each change of horses it was necessary to throw water upon the smoking wheels, yet Napoleon kept calling from the carriage, "On, on! we do not move!" In this manner, with a few days' interval at Paris, he hurried to

Boulogne, in order thence to transport, with incredible diligence, the Army of Invasion to the Rhenish frontier, and the campaign of Austerlitz.

On the emperor's final departure, in September, upon this splendid enterprise, Josephine, after accompanying him to Strasburg, returned as regent of the empire. To aid her in sustaining so arduous a dignity, Cambacérés, as archchancellor, was appointed chief assistant and adviser. The following letter, addressed to that functionary, shows with what anxiety and prudence she prepared for the discharge of her duties. The reader, it is believed, while surprised at the justness and even depth of the views, will find but one expression, on English commerce, liable to direct objection.

*Josephine to Cambacérés.*

"Sir,—To-morrow, as you know, in absence of the emperor, I am to give audience to the Senate and the different authorities. In a conjuncture of such moment, two things are needful,—to inform you of my intentions, and to receive your advice. In this my necessity, to whom can I more properly apply than to the distinguished personage who possesses the emperor's entire confidence, and whom France regards, with reason, as his worthy representative?

"The various addresses have been communicated to me, and I send you an outline of the terms in which, I conceive, I ought to reply.

"I remind the Senate, that as fathers of their country, and conservators of her institutions, to them belongs the sole duty of maintaining a balance between the different powers of the state, not permitting themselves to encroach upon any one. To the legislative body I say that their functions are to judge, and to pass laws, particularly those relating to taxation, without meddling in the march of

government, which such interference would impede. I call to the remembrance of the council of state, that for them has been reserved the important duty of preparing, by previous discussion, good internal laws, and a durable legislation. To the ministers I state, that they form neither a corporation nor even a legislative commission,—neither the administration nor the government; but that, under the title of superior agents of the government, and first commissioners of its chief, they execute, and cause to be executed, orders which are the immediate consequences of legislative determinations. To the clergy I explain, that they form a portion of the state, while the state never is, and never can be, transferred to them; that their sole and exclusive province is the conscience, upon which they are to act so as to form citizens to the country, soldiers for the territory, subjects for the sovereign, and virtuous fathers of families. To the magistracy I say, that applying without interpreting the laws, in unity of views, and identity of jurisprudence, they are to seize with sagacity the spirit of the law, reconciling the happiness of the governed with the respect due to governors. To the savans I acknowledge, that the gentle empire of the arts, of science, and literature tempers whatever might be too austere in arms, which yet, in a season of transition and trial, are indispensable. The manufacturers and merchants are reminded, that they should have but two thoughts, which at bottom are one and the same,—the prosperity of our own productions, and the ruin of those of England. Finally, to the agriculturists it is stated, that the treasures of France are buried in the soil, and that by the ploughshare and the spade they are thence to be extracted. To the heroes of either service I have nothing to say—this palace is filled with their exploits; and from under a canopy of standards, conquered by their valour, and consecrated by their blood, do I speak.

"Let me know speedily, and with perfect frankness, whether I am worthy thus to address the august assembly of my hearers."

While Josephine employed herself in discharging, according to these principles, her delegated power at home, Napoleon in Germany was proceeding from one triumph to another. The skilful combinations at the opening of the campaign first deceived Mack, and afterward shut him up with his army in Ulm. The capture of that city had opened the road to Vienna, and the victory of Austerlitz sealed the fate of the Austrian capital. This decisive victory was gained on the anniversary of the coronation; but many days of December had passed without the arrival of a courier, and the empress, at St. Cloud, expected with anxious alarm news from the army. It was nine o'clock in the evening; the usual circle had assembled in Josephine's saloon, where many a heart, like her own, was but ill at ease. All, however, had given up hope for one day more, hardly assured, like those to whom evil tidings may come, whether the continuance of uncertainty were not a relief. Suddenly, shouts were heard, and immediately after a single horseman galloped into the court of the palace. The sound of bells and the loud cracking of a whip announced a courier. Josephine herself hastened to the nearest window, threw it open, and the words, "Victory—Austerlitz," saluted her ear. Impatient of delay, she descended into the vestibule, followed by her ladies. *Moustache*, for it was the faithful Mameluke whom Napoleon had despatched from the field of battle, delivered a letter to the empress. It was a brief note, written by the emperor's own hand in the moment of victory. Josephine perused it where she stood, reading by the light of the flambeaux which the attendants had snatched up in haste. She drew a superb diamond from her finger, and

gave it to *Moustache*. He merited so distinguished a reward: he had traversed one hundred and fifty miles within the last twelve hours, and was so exhausted that four men were employed to lift him from the saddle, and his last horse fell dead in the court of the palace.

The victory thus announced was productive in its consequences of renewed pleasure to the empress, by the marriage of her Eugene with the Princess-royal of Bavaria; and, as a striking proof of his attachment for both, the first of the royal alliances in Napoleon's family took place in favour of the son of Josephine. Joyfully obeying a mandate which was to restore her for a time to the society of those she loved, the empress immediately left Paris for Munich, where the nuptials were solemnized in January, 1806. "I was delighted," says the noble Rapp, speaking of this event, "to find so many friends assembled, and especially to see the empress once again, who is excellent and amiable as ever." When summoned to the Bavarian capital from the command of the Italian army, in order to receive the hand of Augusta, Eugene displayed all the reluctance natural to a feeling and liberal mind against a political marriage. The personal attractions of the princess, however, her accomplishments and amiableness, taught him to receive as the consummation of his happiness that to which he had merely prepared to submit. The attachment soon became mutual; and the domestic felicity of the viceroy constituted, both in her prosperous and adverse fortunes, a cause of rejoicing to his mother. The princess shared in, and proved herself, in every relation of a wife and a mother, worthy of Josephine's best affections. Her attachment to Eugene was perfect and disinterested. The viceroy had written a desponding letter on the occasion of the divorce, expressing, among other things, regret on the account that he had now ceased to be the adopted son of the emperor; his wife ten-

derly endeavoured to console him on his mother's misfortune, but for herself nobly replied, "It was not the heir of the emperor whom I married, and whom I have loved, but Eugene Beauharnais." On the other hand, it would be difficult to say whether Josephine loved her children or grandchildren better. One of her greatest pleasures after her retreat was to devise, and send to Italy, whatever might amuse, instruct, or interest her young favourites.—Often, too, has she been found in tears, contemplating a family picture, representing the princess, who was very beautiful, with three of her children, one on their mother's shoulder, another climbing her knee, and the third in her arms. "It might be thought," said Josephine with a mournful smile, to one of her ladies, who found her thus employed, "that these tears had their source in other feelings than those of maternal affection. You know me; and I need hardly assure you they flow from no other cause."

On the return of Napoleon from Germany, Paris seemed almost converted into a German capital, such were the numbers of the princes of that country who now thronged the imperial court. One of these, the Prince-royal of Baden, was to marry the newly created Princess Stephanie de Beauharnais, niece to the empress. The following letter, written upon this occasion, is a proof that power, happiness, and success had wrought, and could work, no change in the heart of the writer:—

*Josephine to the Comtesse Girardin.*

"My dear Friend,—I send you a set of jewels, which will serve to prove that I do not cease to think of you. The moment Foncier [jeweller to the empress] brought them, the charming appearance they would have on your beautiful neck occurred to me, and I eagerly made the purchase. Accept, then, this pledge of an attachment which you cannot doubt, on

recalling your own affection for me when I was utterly destitute, but of which, from that very circumstance, it will be pleasing to receive a new remembrance.

"I am truly satisfied with the rank which I occupy only when it procures me the pleasure of obtaining some favour for my friends of old. Your situation, fortunately, deprives me of the happiness of being able to serve you, since all your wishes are fulfilled. I cannot console myself for my want of power to be serviceable, save by often seeking occasions of being at least agreeable. These my heart will instruct me how to divine.

"My charming Stephanie, now adopted by the emperor, is very soon to espouse a German prince. His name must be still a mystery: so soon as I have permission to communicate it, you shall be the first to learn the secret. You know my tenderness for my niece, and can therefore conceive the happiness which I experience in venturing to anticipate hers. Her character, little disposed to ambition, makes her regard this match with a degree of pain, because it removes her from me and her family; yet a while and she will forget every thing in the truest of all the joys of this world, that of seeing the happiness of others depending upon her. You will remember, my dear, we found means of tasting such enjoyment even in prison, by sharing with the wretched captives what we received from our friends! There wants, indeed, only the will to oblige; the means are always in our power; and Stephanie especially is worthy of often meeting with the opportunity.

"Meantime we are very busy with all those futilities necessary to an intended. I am delighted with every thing the emperor does for my favourite.—She is, I know, less overjoyed than I, from the causes already mentioned, and finds only one consolation, in being able, on quitting France, to take with her some early friends,—a privilege which is to be

granted. If, then, your protegée desires an agreeable situation, I believe I can procure one near Stephanie's person, which will be preferable to one in my service.

"I must leave you, dear friend, for Foncier.—There are duties to which we must sacrifice even friendship. You will therefore pardon my breaking off abruptly for a purpose of this importance. For your sake I have vanquished my sloth, not wishing to employ the pen of my good Deschamps [private secretary]. Between friends such as we two, a third party is to me always a restraint. Are you not of the same opinion? Adieu, my friend. Empress or in prison, be assured no one loves you as does

"JOSEPHINE."

The spring of 1806 beheld, in succession, most of the members of the imperial family obtain independent principalities. More favoured than all the rest, except Joseph, Louis and Hortense were raised to the throne of Holland; and could grandeur command or ensure happiness, Josephine had subsequently never known misfortune. Every wish, save one, and that one seemed at last supplied, was granted. She found herself on the most splendid of European thrones, beloved by the wonderful man who had placed her there, adored by the French nation, and respected even by enemies. Her children occupied stations second only to her own, with the prospect, either directly or in their issue, of succeeding to empire when death should relax the giant grasp that now swayed the sceptre. The Prussian campaign, closed by the victory of Jena on the 14th of October, and the defeat of the Russians at Friedland, with the subsequent treaty of Tilsit, concluded in the following June, left Napoleon arbiter of Europe, and seemed to have invested his power with a permanency and force beyond change. We embrace this period, therefore, both as being filled with events

alien to our subject, and because it presents the crisis of Josephine's greatness, to introduce a brief sketch of her manner of life as empress.

In her own apartments Josephine's ordinary hour of rising was nine o'clock. But on other occasions we have Constant's account as follows:—"I had a regular order to enter the emperor's apartment at seven o'clock. When the empress passed the night there, it was a very unusual circumstance not to find the august spouses awake. The emperor commonly asked for tea or an infusion of orange-flowers, and rose immediately after. The empress would say, with a smile, 'Will you rise so soon?—Remain a little longer.'—'Well, if I do, you will not sleep, will you?' was his majesty's usual reply; then he would roll her up in the coverlet, laughing and tickling her on the cheeks and neck. In the course of a few minutes the empress rose also, and putting on a loose *robe du matin*, either read the journals while the emperor dressed, or retired by a private access to her own apartments, but never without addressing some kind and condescending words to myself."

The important arrangements of the toilet always commenced at nine. These occupied an hour, and Josephine then passed into a saloon appropriated to morning receptions of all those who had solicited and obtained the favour of an audience, whether as respected matters within her own influence, or petitions to be presented to the emperor. Nothing could exceed the real kindness with which Josephine listened to all these applications, or the sincerity of her endeavours to promote the success of such as appeared proper, and possessing claims on her support. She has indeed been blamed for too great facility, and little discernment in selecting the objects of her bounty. Both accusations may be true; but we must recollect that her dispositions were beneficent, and her powers limited exceedingly; while to "the amiable Josephine" numerous petitioners of all ranks and situations applied, who had, or believed

they had, no other access to the throne. It is proverbially difficult, too, for sovereigns to distinguish true merit or real indigence in those who crave favours; and in a court so intriguing this difficulty must have been proportionally increased. Three things, however, are certain: Josephine was fully sensible both of the duty of inquiry and her liability to be deceived; next, she never insisted beyond a legitimate influence; and, lastly, was perfectly firm when convinced of the propriety of an application, and of her own right to obtain its object. The first of these inferences has been sufficiently illustrated by previous letters; the following notes, among many others, testify to the truth of the last two:—

*The Empress to M. de Villedeuil.*

"Sir,—The petition addressed to me concerns the archchancellor. If you will draw up a memorial for him, and transmit it to me, I shall in all sincerity endeavour to get it noted by the emperor, without which my influence would be of little avail. I shall esteem myself happy, sir, in giving you any mark of the respect I have always entertained for yourself and your generous family, with whom I was very intimate at the period of my arrival in France. Rely equally upon my promises and the emperor's justice.

The brief note to Fouché is in a different strain.

"My Lord Duke,—I will that the young Dutetre be placed in some way or other, while I am empress; you would very speedily forget him should I cease to reign. I salute you."

The audiences concluded, the empress went to breakfast, which was served exactly at eleven During the absence of the emperor, this repast was made in company with the first lady of honour and the other ladies of the court whose rank entitled

them to that distinction. Napoleon always breakfasted in great haste, usually in about seven or eight minutes, and generally alone, at a small table *à la fourchette*, taking a cup of coffee afterward. During the consulate, breakfast was announced at ten, and then the meal was always a social one; but this hour appears to have interfered with business or etiquette; and afterward Napoleon more frequently breakfasted alone, while engaged in audiences of a very private nature. Breakfast ended, the empress either played a game at billiards, or, if the weather permitted, walked. This exercise, in either case, did not continue long, and she passed the remainder of the morning, from about midday till half-past two or three o'clock, in her apartments, working, conversing, and reading with her ladies. We have already mentioned how beautifully Josephine embroidered, and this accomplishment continued to be her chief amusement, much of the most splendid furniture in the various palaces being covered with pieces executed by her own hand, or with the assistance of her ladies. The following billet is a curious melange of orders pertaining to these labours, while it shows how kindly Josephine addressed even her inferior attendants:—

*To Aubert, Femme-de-chambre to the Empress.*

"My dear Miss Aubert,—I beg you will call in at Bennais's in returning, and see if he really intends to bring my rouge boxes. I have not a single one, as you know. Inquire also whether the frames which I ordered of him are ready; my ladies remain with folded arms, and I myself have nothing at all to do. At the same time, take in your way the *Père de Famille*, and purchase, on my account, a complete assortment of worsteds, with some dozens of English needles.—Here is a lot of commissions for you all at once; not to forget them, think of

me. I am quite sure you will acquit youself well, and return quickly."

While the rest were at work, one of the ladies, permanently appointed to the office of reader, read aloud at such times as conversation was not preferred. When any literary production gave more than usual pleasure, the reading was immediately recommenced, and the work perused a second time. The volumes selected were interesting but useful books, from the standard writers, and all new publications of repute. Works of taste and imagination constituted, of course, a large portion of these public readings; novels, however, unless in particular instances, were excluded. Napoleon, indeed, disliked to see novels anywhere about his palaces; in traversing the antechambers, if he found any of his attendants reading, he seldom failed to examine the book, and if a novel, condemned it to the flames without mercy. The individual, too, was sure of a lecture, which usually began with the question,—"So, you could find no better reading than that?" While the empress and her ladies were engaged as described, the emperor was in the habit of looking in upon the fair party at intervals throughout the morning. On these occasions, he is described as being extremely amiable, amusing, and in high spirits; for he rarely visited the saloon in the morning unless when in good-humour, or, in his own phrase, "when things went well." Josephine, too, though more rarely, would venture into his cabinet, but when he required her presence for any conference of importance, he knocked at the little door of private communication. The empress joyfully obeyed the signal; and these interviews, which generally took place in the evening, were often continued so long that on returning she found all her ladies asleep.

About three o'clock, or a little before, the empress, attended by her ladies, rode out in an open

carriage, sometimes, though rarely, accompanied by her spouse. On returning, she began to dress for the evening. The *grande toilette*, being an affair of great importance, was not unfrequently attended by Napoleon in person, especially when the imperial pair were upon some excursion; for, seldom making any change in his own costume, Josephine's dressing-room, unless when his ministers confined him to the cabinet, was his favourite lounge at this hour of leisure. His presence there, agreeable as it might be to her to whom his solicitude in this respect gave so much pleasure, was, however, any thing but desired by the unfortunate tirewomen, among whose gimcracks he occasionally played sad havoc. It appears to have been no unusual circumstance for him to empty every box within reach, insisting on the empress making essay of various dresses, in order that he might decide which were most becoming. He would treat in like manner all the jewel cases he could lay hands on, knocking about their precious contents, as he threw them in succession from him, after trying their effect. In this way, he once actually went through the whole wardrobe and *parure* destined for a journey of weeks. Sometimes the empress, though possessed of exquisite taste, had the misfortune to choose a costume displeasing to her lord; if the offending dress made a second appearance, his disapprobation certainly followed in some marked manner; and he once threw the contents of an inkglass on an offensive robe of blue and silver tissue, as Josephine, fully dressed for the evening, entered his cabinet.

At six o'clock dinner was served; but, unless on very particular occasions, Napoleon forgot, and delayed it indefinitely. Hence, in the annals of the imperial table, dinners at nine, and even ten o'clock, are not unfrequent. Their majesties always dined together—alone, or with a few invited guests, members of the imperial family or of the ministry.

Invitations were delivered by the grand master of the ceremonies, who informed the grand marshal of the necessary arrangements, and in what manner the guests should sit; the grand marshal, again, received his orders directly from the sovereign. When their majesties dined *en grand couvert*, their table was placed under a canopy on a platform elevated one step, and with two armchairs, one on the right for the emperor, the other on the left for Josephine, the former wearing a hat with plumes, and his consort a diadem. Their majesties were informed by the grand marshal when the preparations were completed, and entered the room in the following order:—Pages, assistant master of the ceremonies, prefects of the palace, first prefect and a master of the ceremonies, the grand marshal and grand master of the ceremonies; the empress, attended by her first equery and first chamberlain; the emperor, colonel-general of the guard, grand chamberlain, and grand equery; the grand almoner, who blessed the meat, and retired, leaving their majesties to a solitary board, unless when guests of kingly rank were present, or humbler ones sat down there by invitation. The pages performed the more subordinate, and the stewards the menial part of the service at the imperial table; but the immediate wants of their majesties were ministered to by the grand marshal (Duroc, Duke de Friuli), first chamberlain (Comte de Beaumont), the first equery (Comte d'Harville), and the chamberlains (all noblemen) in turn. The other tables were served by the stewards and attendants in livery. But when the repast was in private, it took place in a small interior dining-room, without any etiquette, generally some of the members of the court, and especially the grand marshal, sitting down with their majesties. On these occasions, much more frequent than the dinners of ceremony, favourite attendants, named by Napoleon, waited at table.

Napoleon always ate hastily, rarely remaining

above ten minutes at table; so that those who knew him well took care to be prepared beforehand. The viceroy claims the merit of this invention. "Nay, Eugene, you have not had time to dine," said Napoleon, seeing him rise from table with himself. "Pardon me," replied the prince, "I dined in advance."—"A prudent foresight," said the emperor, laughing. On Napoleon rising in this hurried manner, Josephine made a sign to those who dined with them to remain, but followed herself into a small saloon. Here a page brought the ingredients in utensils of silver gilt, upon a gold tray; and the empress poured out and sugared a small cup of coffee, tasted, by sipping a few drops, then presented it to the emperor. These precautions she took because at first, in his moments of absence, he sometimes drank it cold, or without or with too much sugar, and sometimes two cups in succession; any of which irregularities made him ill, and hence, probably, the stories of his immoderate use of this beverage. This custom of eating so precipitately both induced slovenly habits and frequently caused sickness. Napoleon not only dispensed with the use of his knife and fork as respected his own plate, but also helped himself with his fingers from the dishes nearest him, and dipped his bread in the sauce. In the attacks of indigestion, which were often very severe, and attended with vomiting, nothing could exceed the anxious tenderness of Josephine; for Napoleon supported this sickness with scarcely a degree of composure.

On the first symptoms of the malady, he flung himself at full length on the carpet of his bedroom, and Josephine was instantly by his side. She rested his head on her knees, stroking his temples, and applying frictions of eau de Cologne to his breast, consoling and encouraging him in the best way she could. A few cups of tea seldom failed to remove the acute pain; but he remained for a length of time feeble and exhausted, when Josephine, in her most

touching accents, would say, "Now you are better, will you lie down a little? I will remain with Constant by your bedside." These attacks and the manner of treatment have probably given rise to the idea that Napoleon was subject to epileptic fits. One of the longest and most severe indispositions of this kind occurred during the excursion to Mayence, and in the night. Josephine, in perfect darkness, for the chamber light had been extinguished, and not wishing to awake any one, assured that nobody but herself would be tolerated in the apartment, threw some part of her dress about her, and groped her way to the chamber of the aid-de-camp on duty, from whom, astonished as he felt at such a visit, she obtained a light, and continued alone to watch over and apply remedies to her husband. Next day both appeared languid and fatigued. How selfish and ungrateful a being must Napoleon have been, when, on the very same excursion, he, with his own hand, almost dragged Josephine from bed to attend a ball, while suffering under one of those nervous headaches which frequently caused her absolute torture. The first lady of honour, Madame de Rochefoucauld, witnessed this barbarity, which she mentioned with tears. Josephine appeared at the ball and reception with her usual kindness and grace, remained the requisite time, but almost fainted on returning to her apartments, yet without uttering a single murmur of complaint.

After dinner, the empress passed the evening in her usual circle, or with a small party, either invited, or consisting of favourite ministers and officers, who, having come on business, had been detained by the emperor. When there were no receptions, concerts, or theatre, every one retired at midnight; but Josephine, who loved to sit up, continued to play at backgammon with one of her chamberlains, usually the Comte de Beaumont, long after the palace had been left to a repose, interrupted only by the heavy tread of the sentinel in the court below.

Such was the general tenor of Josephine's life, diversified as it might be by casual occurrences.—The most common interruptions of its sameness, besides the more lengthened excursions already delineated, were short journeys to the various royal residences, especially Rambouillet and Fontainbleau, of which Napoleon was remarkably fond, and where many of the most signal incidents in his career took place. Hunting-parties formed the great amusement in these retreats,—an aristocratic exercise, of which, because it was so, Napoleon only pretended to be fond. The empress, attended by her ladies, followed the chase in an open caleche, attired in a riding-dress with white feathers, and a round hat; the gentlemen also wore a particular coat of green; every other etiquette was dispensed with, a *dejeuner à la fourchette* being laid out on tables beneath the forest boughs, to which all the hunting-party received invitations. Once, during a very long chase, the stag, hard pressed, took shelter beneath the carriage of the empress, who begged the poor animal's life; and to mark it as her peculiar favourite and protegée, had a silver collar put round the neck. Such distinction from the fair hand of the "good Josephine" was sure protection against the rifle of every noble professor of woodcraft; and the stag long roamed its native glades unhurt, till some churl brought it down, after its gentle mistress could no longer protect her dependants. The subject of hunting naturally leads to Napoleon's horsemanship, on which the most absurd encomiums have been passed. But the truth is, he was an ungraceful rider, and seemed a firm one only because the most extraordinary pains were bestowed on the training of his horses. They were first selected with the greatest care, as respected their *dispositions* and afterward went through a most severe system of discipline, being assailed by every species of annoyance, —blows, fireworks, discharges of musketry, beating

of drums, waving of banners, and even dead carcasses thrown among their feet, till they were perfectly accustomed to bear unmoved every sound or sight likely to occur on the field of battle. Even after all this, the emperor could never manage a horse well, save at full gallop; and the feat, of which so much has been said, of his almost instantly stopping in mid career, was the result of practice in the animal, more than of skill in the rider.

The enmity of the Bonaparte family against Josephine, and the folly of their conduct, have already been noticed. In her private society, at least before their various dispersion to their respective kingdoms, principalities, archdukedoms, &c., they of course mingled habitually. Her conduct towards these relatives showed a perfect candour and firmness, which imperceptibly gained respect and influence even over dislike. That influence was uniformly exerted to bring back peace and reconciliation between the members of a family who were perpetually squabbling, and who owed every thing to the affection, and nothing to the respect, of Napoleon. The two following letters, with which we close this chapter, are honourable illustrations of these facts.

*The Empress to Madame Caroline Murat.*

"You are not, my sister, an ordinary woman;—and therefore I write to you after a fashion very different from that which I would employ with a commonplace character. I tell you frankly, and without reserve, that I am dissatisfied with you.—How! you actually torture the poor Murat! you make him shed tears! With so many means of pleasing, why do you ever prefer to command? Your husband obeys through fear, when he ought to yield to persuasion alone. By thus usurping a part which does not belong to us, you convert a brave man into a timid slave, and yourself into an exacting tyrant.—

This brings shame to him, and cannot be an honour to you. Our glory—the glory of woman—lies in submission; and if it be permitted us to reign, our empire rests on gentleness and goodness. Your husband, already so great in the opinion of the world, through his valour and exploits, feels as if he beheld all his laurels brought to the dust on appearing in your presence. You take a pride in humbling them before your pretensions; and the title of being the sister of a hero is, with you, reason for believing yourself a heroine. Believe me, my sister, that character, with the qualities which it supposes, becomes us not. Let us joy modestly in the glory of our spouses, and place ours in softening their manners, and leading the world to pardon their deeds. Let us merit this praise, that the nation, while it applauds the bravery of our husbands, may also commend the gentleness bestowed by Providence on their wives to temper that bravery."

*The Empress to Napoleon's Mother.*

"MADAM AND MOST HONOURED MOTHER,—Employ the ascendency which your experience, dignity, virtues, and the love of the emperor give, in order to restore to his family that internal peace now banished from it. I fear to intrude in these domestic dissensions, from the apprehension lest calumny should accuse me of inflaming them by such interference. It belongs to you, madam, to bring back calm; and for this purpose, it is only necessary to say that you are informed of these discords. Your prudence will have commenced the work by pointing out the evil, and will speedily discover the remedy. I name no person, but your sagacity will divine all concerned. You are not a stranger to human passion; and vice, which has never approached you, will discover itself in those who are dear to you, through the very interest which you take in

their welfare. You will not be long in remarking the progress of ambition, perhaps that of cupidity, in more than one mind, ingenuous till now, but which the favours of fortune begin to corrupt. You will view with apprehension the constantly increasing ravages of luxury, and, with still more pain, the want of feeling that follows in its train. I do not, however, insist upon this accusation, because, perhaps, it has less foundation than the rest, and because it is not impossible I may have taken for hardness of heart what was only intoxication of spirit. Be this, however, as it may, the effect is the same, manifested as this haughtiness is by vanity, insolence, and harsh refusals, producing deplorable impressions upon those who witness these outrages. Men are not slow to sharpen the memory of those who seem disposed to forget their origin, and the sole means of inducing others to pardon our good fortune is to enjoy it with moderation, sharing its gifts with those who have been less favoured."

## CHAPTER VIII.

Young Napoleon of Holland—His Death, and Anecdotes of his Disposition—Josephine at Bayonne—Extracts from her Journal—Opinions of the Affairs of Spain—Return to St. Cloud, and last Game at "Prisoners' Base"—Interview at Erfurth, and Napoleon's Dream—Second Campaign of Vienna—Death of Lannes, and Connexion of Events with the Divorce—Treaty of Schoenbrunn, and Return of Napoleon—Scenes at Fontainbleau—Announcement of the Divorce—Misery and Resignation of Josephine—Letter to Napoleon—Eugene and Hortense—Consummation of the Divorce, and Departure of the Empress—Her Manner of Life at Malmaison and Navarre—Birth of the King of Rome—Letters and Anecdotes illustrative of Josephine's Interest in Maria Louisa and her Son—Russian and Saxon Campaigns—Reverses of Napoleon, and Attachment of Josephine—Their Correspondence—Abdication—Attentions shown to Josephine—Her last Illness—Death—and Character.

THE misfortunes and wrongs of the empress may be considered as having commenced in the spring of 1807, with the death of her grandson the prince-royal of Holland. The boy, then in his fifth year, evinced, from earliest infancy, the happiest dispositions, and had gained, in an astonishing manner, upon the affections and hopes of his uncle. He was, besides, the first-born; and, except his two brothers, the only acknowledged son of the imperial family in direct male lineage; his father was the emperor's favourite brother, and his birth drew more closely the ties which united his wife and her children to the affections of Napoleon. There appears, therefore, no reason for discrediting the belief then generally entertained of the emperor's intention to adopt the child. Thus, in the offspring of her daughter, Josephine would have given a successor to the throne of France, and, as has been remarked by a French writer, "her own sorrows, perhaps all the evils that followed, might have been prevented." This much is certain, that no serious intentions of divorce mani-

fested themselves from the time of the child's birth, and that, during the summer which succeeded his death, overtures were made to Alexander at Tilsit, relative to an imperial alliance with a princess of his house. Even in the midst of the triumphs of that campaign, Napoleon showed himself strongly affected by the loss of his little favourite, and subsequently was often heard to ejaculate, amid the labours of his cabinet, "To whom shall I leave all this?"

The boy upon whom the destinies of so great an empire may thus be said to have rested died at the Hague, after a few hours' illness, of the *croup*. So sudden and fatal was the attack, that before Corvisart's directions could be received, which, from his knowledge of the complaint, might have proved effectual, the child had ceased to live.* Hortense never quitted the room for an instant. When all was over, her attendants endeavoured gently to wile her from the apartment: but divining their purpose, even in the distraction of grief, she clung with such convulsive grasp to a sofa by the bed of her child, that her arms could not be unfolded, and she was carried out in this condition. For hours the most alarming apprehensions were entertained for the queen's life. In vain were remedies applied; her eyes continued fixed and without a tear, her breathing oppressed, and her limbs rigid and motionless, till one of the chamberlains, bearing in the dead body of the little prince, laid it on the mother's knees, leaving the rest to nature. The sight of her son, now shrouded in the peaceful attire of the grave, recalled the unhappy Hortense to a more present and tender sentiment of her loss; she caught the inanimate form to her bosom, and despair yielded to the sweet agony of tears.

To Josephine this loss was irremediable; hers

* Corvisart, Napoleon's private physician, was the first who made successful researches on this disease.

was a grief not less acute, yet greater than a mother's sorrow; for while she grieved for a beloved child, she trembled to think what might be the consequences to herself. Naturally fond of children, she had loved the young Napoleon Charles with a tenderness corresponding to the hopes concentrated on his head. After receiving intelligence of a bereavement which had reached her, before she had perfect knowledge that the blow was menaced, she shut herself up for three days, weeping bitterly; and, as if to nourish grief, collecting around her his portrait, his hair, his playthings,—every relic that might recall the image of her grandson. A melancholy coincidence added to the poignancy of her sorrow on the sight of the portrait. Some time before setting out for the campaign of Tilsit, the emperor had held a review of the guard, and, on retiring to his apartments in the Tuileries, had, according to custom, flung his sword on one seat and his hat on another, continuing to walk through the saloon in conversation with Josephine. Meanwhile, the child had entered unobserved, and, putting the swordbelt over his little neck, and the hat upon his head, began to follow behind his uncle with military step, attempting, at the same time, to whistle a favourite march. Napoleon turned round, took the boy in his arms, and kissed him fondly, saying, "See, Josephine, what a charming picture!" The empress, ever studious to gratify her husband, had the young prince painted in this costume by Gerard. The portrait was sent to St. Cloud on the very morning which brought the sad intelligence of the death of the original.

The boy was very like his father, and, consequently, bore a strong resemblance to the emperor. His hair was fair, his eyes blue, and his countenance marked with extraordinary intelligence. He was likewise extremely fond of his uncle, who, in turn, doted upon him as if he had been his own child. When

only three years of age, observing one morning that his shoemaker's bill was paid in five-franc pieces stamped with the head of Napoleon, he fell a-crying bitterly, repeating, "It is very naughty to give away the picture of *uncle Bibiche*." This appellation the boy had applied to the emperor from the following circumstance:—Josephine kept several gazelles in the park of St. Cloud, which, though shy to every one else, willingly followed Napoleon, who had contrived to render them perfectly tame by giving them snuff from his box. His little nephew always formed one in the party with the gazelles, assisting in giving them snuff, and even getting upon the backs of these beautiful creatures. From observing the effect produced by his uncle's rappee, the child, imitating the sound of sneezing, naturally used the word *Bibiche*. This name, however applied to Napoleon, was used only with his familiars; for the little prince seemed to have an innate feeling of the latter's dignity. One morning, for example, when silently making his way through the saloon, amid a crowd of distinguished personages, Murat, then Grand Duke of Berg, caught him in his arms. "What! Napoleon, not bid me good morning!"—"No," said the child, disengaging himself, "not before my uncle the *emperor*." In like manner, every thing he received from his uncle was preferred to all others. King Louis, who loved him tenderly, seeing he disregarded some new playthings he had just brought him, said, "Why, my dear child, look how very ugly the old ones are!"—"Ah! yes, papa, but I got them from my uncle." The empress, too, was greatly beloved by her grandson, and all her gifts highly prized. Knowing this, Hortense was much surprised to find, that on the day of the new year immediately preceding his death he did not seem so delighted as usual with grandmamma's customary presents. The queen, with her son on her knee, was seated by a window fronting the grand avenue of the palace of the Hague: the day was wet,

and the road very dirty. The child, indifferent to the toys beside him, continued looking out. "So, then, Napoleon, you are not grateful for grandmamma's kindness?"—"Oh! yes, mamma; but then she is so good, I am used to it."—"Is there anything else?"—"Yes, mamma; but—look at these little boys."—"Well, do you wish money to give them?"—"No; papa gave me some this morning, and it is given away."—"Well, what ails my dear child?"—"Oh, I know you won't let me; but if I could run about in that *beautiful puddle*, it would amuse me more than even good grandmamma's presents!" What chiefly delighted Napoleon was, the firmness of character, and, if the desires of a child may be so termed, the predilection for war displayed by his intended heir. Often, in their amusements, the emperor would put these qualities to curious but severe tests. At breakfast, he would seat him upon his knee, making the poor little fellow taste of such things as are usually most annoying to children; the spirited boy would try to look stern, but never refused to take what was offered, though spite and vexation were painted on every feature of his really beautiful countenance. Strawberries (and it is curious that the fruit produced similar effects on Maria Louisa's son) always brought on severe indisposition. Though a favourite dish, they were, of course, strictly prohibited; but one day the prince had so wrought upon his nurse, that she permitted him to eat a large quantity. The usual consequence ensued; he was attacked by sickness and vomiting. Hortense insisted on knowing who had disobeyed her orders. "Mamma," said the courageous boy, though still suffering, "you may punish me, but I gave my word not to tell, and I will never break my promise." An affecting circumstance is the solicitude shown by this singular child in his parents' unhappy misunderstandings; on observing their estrangement, he would take his father's hand, who

thus suffered himself to be conducted to the queen and the artless pleadings of their son rarely failed to reconcile two beings possessing great goodness of heart, but both suffering from the not uncommon calamity in married life of misunderstanding each other's feelings.

Napoleon reached St. Cloud from Tilsit on the 27th of July, passing the remainder of the summer and autumn with the empress there, or at Fontainbleau, coming to Paris only to hold receptions, and never remaining longer than twenty-four hours. The emperor never appeared more attentive to Josephine than during this retreat, as it might almost be termed. They often rode out in an open carriage alone, without guards or attendants; but Napoleon betrayed a restlessness and impatience of repose which did not escape observation, and urged him to pursue the chase as if with the ardour of a real passion. This may have given rise in part to such surmises; but certain it is, that even then whispers of a divorce escaped the initiated. This kind of life continued, with little variation, till the middle of November, when the imperial pair suddenly, as usual, set off for Italy, travelling with such speed that Eugene had no knowledge of the intended visit until the emperor had approached within two miles of Milan. The viceroy got to horse instantly, attended by a few of his principal officers. On the meeting of the relatives, Napoleon extended his hand: "Come, Eugene, seat yourself here, and let us enter your capital together." The Milan decree, which declared the son of Josephine successor to the iron crown, seemed more firmly to establish the family connexion; but in all this writers have seen only a prelude to the divorce, and an intention, by working upon his gratitude, to render Eugene more complaisant in the contemplated arrangements. These afterthoughts might very probably have been entertained, but weighty reasons of foreign policy required Napoleon's survey

of Italy; and the following important incident shows that he was still anything but insensible to the claims of Josephine. Leaving the empress with her daughter-in-law at Milan, Napoleon and the viceroy set out on the tour of Lombardy, as far as Venice. At Mantua, the emperor had invited to a private conference his brother Lucien, with whom he had held no intercourse since the marriage of the latter with Madame Jouberton, the divorced wife of a merchant, or pawnbroker, as some say, and at that time a bankrupt in America. On the occasion of this interview, Duroc, grand marshal of the household, directed the favourite attendant of the emperor to wait in an antechamber adjoining to his master's sleeping apartment, with orders to admit no one else. This was about six in the evening; in a few minutes after, Lucien knocked, made himself known, and was ushered into the bedchamber, where Napoleon waited his approach. The brothers coldly saluted, and the door closed. In a little time their discourse became so loud and animated, that the attendant in the adjacent apartment could not avoid overhearing the whole; and his account, in substance, agrees with Duroc's confession to Bourrienne. The emperor urged his brother to dissolve a disgraceful marriage, holding out a crown or his displeasure as the alternative. Lucien refused "to abandon the mother of his children." The altercation became more and more violent. "We shall see," cried Napoleon, "to what you will be reduced by your obstinacy and foolish passion for a *woman of gallantry*."—"At least," retorted Lucien, "my woman of gallantry is young and handsome." This allusion to the empress stung Napoleon to the very core. He held his watch in his hand, which he dashed into fragments against the floor, exclaiming, "I could crush you as I do that bauble; but you are my brother;—go!" The angry conference lasted above an hour Lucien came out from it in a state of terrible agitation, pale, trem-

bling, his eyes inflamed, and overflowing with tears. Its issue seemed deeply to have affected Napoleon; for he scarcely uttered a single word during the remainder of the evening. Of Lucien's conduct there can be but one opinion; that it was generous in the disinterested attachment evinced for his own wife, but most unmanly as respects the attack on Josephine.

From this hasty Italian tour Napoleon and the empress returned to Paris on the evening of new-year's day, 1808. A few days after were celebrated the nuptials of Mademoiselle de Tascher, niece to Josephine, with the Duke d'Arberg, one of the princes of the Confederation. Almost immediately after followed the marriage of the Prince Hohenzollern with a niece of Murat, and, at no great interval, that of Berthier with a princess of Bavaria. All this, along with other circumstances, tended to render the winter one of the gayest which Paris had yet witnessed under the empire. Masked balls were especial favourites; and those of the ambassador for the new kingdom of Italy were distinguished for their particular splendour. Napoleon, contrary to his usual prejudice against such disguisements, resolving to be present and to *dance* at one of these, ordered ten different dresses to be carried into the apartment allotted to him. These were in succession assumed, and ten different times the wearer was detected. At supper, the same evening, after his return, the emperor was relating to Berthier, Mortier, Duroc, and other officers present, the history of his unfortunate masqueradings, at the same time laughing very heartily at his want of success in *unplaying the emperor*. "Do you know, gentlemen," continued Napoleon, "that I was regularly discovered by a young lady (*jeune dame*), who seemed an accomplished intriguer; and yet, would you believe it, I could never recognise the *flirt*?" Here the empress could no longer restrain herself. It was Jose-

phine herself who had at once detected her spouse, and piqued his curiosity. During the carnival of the same winter, masked balls at the opera were described as very amusing; and the empress entreated Napoleon to take her to see one, but received a positive denial. "Well, I shall go without you, *mon ami*."—"As you please," said the emperor, as he rose from the breakfast-table. At the appointed hour Josephine kept her word; but no sooner had she set off for the ball than Napoleon, sending for one of her femmes-de-chambre, informed himself exactly of the empress's costume, and followed. This time every precaution was taken against discovery. The emperor, with Duroc, another officer, and his own favourite valet, all in dominoes, entered a plain carriage, and, *arm in arm*, made their appearance in the ball-room. It had also been agreed that they should address each other by feigned names; Napoleon was *Auguste*, Duroc *François*, and so on. They traversed the whole apartments undiscovered, examined the personages present, but could find no one in the slightest degree resembling the empress. Napoleon, greatly alarmed, was on the point of quitting the place, when a mask, approaching, began to address him with a liveliness and wit that left him little chance in a reply. Perceiving the imperial embarrassment, the unknown redoubled exertions; repartee followed close upon repartee; one portrait succeeded to another as the originals passed; while a state secret, of no importance in itself, though startling in its repetition, occasionally whispered in his ear, made Napoleon exclaim, "*Comment, diable*. who are you?" The mask would laugh and recommence. After thus tormenting him for some half-hour's space, the unknown suddenly disappeared in the crowd. The emperor's curiosity was very strongly excited; but he had had enough, and left the place in no good-humour. On arriving at the palace, he found the empress had retired for the

night. Next morning, upon seeing Josephine,—"Well," said he, "so you were not at the ball last night?"—"Yes, indeed."—"Now, Josephine!"—"I assure you I was there. And you, *mon ami*," inquired the empress, with a half-suppressed smile, "what were you doing all the evening?"—"I was at work in my cabinet," said Napoleon, quite coolly. "Oh, *Auguste!*" replied the empress, with an arch gesture,—and the whole secret was divulged. Napoleon enjoyed greatly this practical joke, which had so completely turned the tables against his own contrivance. It appeared that the empress, disliking her first choice, had changed her costume, and despite all his precautions, recognised Napoleon by his foot and boot.

On the 5th of April, Napoleon and Josephine departed from St. Cloud on the last tour of any length which they were ever destined to make in the society of each other. In its consequences, also, this journey proved the most fatal, not excepting even the Russian expedition, of all the enterprises of Bonaparte; for, with his interference in the affairs of Spain commenced the operation of those causes which finally issued in his downfall. We speak thus in reference only to the sacred rights of all nations,—those rights vested in the people; for, as respects Charles and Ferdinand, the representatives and guardians of those rights, they so basely betrayed their trust, and their characters were otherwise so contemptible, that, personally, they excite hardly a transient regret. Even the kind-hearted Josephine, though she ever disapproved of the principle, and trembled for the results of the Spanish war, never expressed sympathy with the Spanish sovereigns. "I cannot esteem the Prince of Asturias" (Ferdinand VII.), she said, long after the events to which she referred; "first, from his conduct towards his father; and next, because of the letters, destitute of every sentiment of dignity, which he wrote to Napo-

leon. In these, he demanded a wife of the emperor; a request which irritated the latter to a degree I have seldom seen equalled. 'Is it possible,' Napoleon would frequently exclaim to me, 'that any one can stoop so low! I give him any who belongs to me! Why, madam, I would refuse him your waiting-maid; persuaded, that even she would have ideas too elevated for such a husband.'" In like manner, what respect could Josephine entertain for Charles or his queen, each insensible to degradation, provided they were permitted to enjoy the society of Godoi, the flatterer of the one and the paramour of the other?—But we anticipate. The excursion through the southern departments (for under this pretence Napoleon set out for Bayonne) continued, in all, nearly four months, from the beginning of April to the end of July. Frequent allusion has been made to the hasty manner in which Napoleon determined on such journeys. The following note, addressed by Josephine to the Comtesse de la Rochefoucauld, her lady of honour, then at Fontainbleau, which was to be the first stage in their present progress, is singularly characteristic of the facts already stated on this subject.

"We set out at four this morning, and will be with you to breakfast at ten. I hasten to expedite this billet, that you may not be taken by surprise. You know the emperor's activity and inflexible resolution; both seem to increase with events. But an hour ago I was still completely ignorant of this departure. We were at cards. 'Be ready, madam,' said he to me, 'to get into your carriage at midnight.'—'But,' answered I, 'it is now past nine.'—'It is so; you must require some time for your toilet; let us start at two.'—'Where are we going, if you please?'—'To Bayonne.'—'Only so far! and my pensioners, I have to regulate their affairs.'—'I cannot, madam, refuse you one hour for the unfortunate; take an-

other to write to your friends,—you will not forget Madame de la Rochefoucauld.' Good-night, my dear friend. I am just falling asleep,—they will carry me thus to my carriage, and I shall not awaken till with you, to bid you good-morning and embrace you with all my heart."

Of the eventful journey thus announced, the following are some of Josephine's notes, written carelessly, but with so much of her usual good sense and discernment, as induces regret that hitherto nothing else of the numerous journals she is understood to have kept, and which are supposed to have been deposited with her son, have yet seen the light:—

"This evening we leave St. Cloud, in order to visit the whole of the western coast of France. I shall trace a few notes in pencil.

"At Etampes* we were stopped by a number of young people of both sexes, who presented us, some with cherries, others with roses. The emperor, in passing through their village, sent for the mayor and the curate. The former, a merry peasant, began to banter his compatriots on the nature of their presents. 'Certainly,' said the emperor, 'however beautiful theirs may be, an ear of corn and a bunch of grapes would have been more rare.'—'Here are three of each sort,' replied the rural magistrate; 'and confess, sir, that in April it is good farming.'—'Nature has been bountiful to your canton,' observed the emperor, presenting the offering to me.—'Accept it, madam; and forget not those whom Providence deigns to keep in mind.'—'Providence,' said the curate, 'always blesses the industrious; for they fulfil the most important of his laws.'—'Here,' remarked

* Etampes is the first town in the Orleannais proceeding from Paris to Bordeaux. The passage is interesting, as an example of Napoleon's manner with his subjects; but how are we to explain corn and grapes in April? Was this one of his contrivances?

the emperor, making a sign for the postillions to proceed, 'here are men who unite flowers and fruits,—the useful with the agreeable. They deserve to succeed.'

"*Orleans.*—The national guard was under arms, and the authorities in full attendance; but from the knitting of his brows, I saw that the emperor was not pleased. 'It is painful for me,' were his words 'to have to repay with severity these expressions of joy. But I have no reproaches to make to the people; I address myself to the authorities. You perform your functions improperly, or you do not perform them at all. How have the sums been employed which I granted for the canal? How comes it, that on the roll of sales two thousand arpents of common, as divided in 1805 and 1806, are totally suppressed? I require restitution. The national domains have been below par, and the purchases more difficult, during the last eighteen months,—the date of your entering upon office, Mr. Prefect. Whence are these things? I am not ignorant that here there exist two opinions, as directly opposed to the government as they are to each other. I have no desire that opinions should be subjects of persecution; but if they break out into deeds, and these deeds be crimes—no pity!' The storm passed, the emperor assumed a less severe tone, and talked familiarly with the bishop and civil functionaries, not excepting even the prefect. But his observations were just. It is but too certain, that in these departments of the Loire the jacobins and emigrants have in turn been protected.

"*Bordeaux.*—Here exist two dispositions perfectly distinct, and that in a reverse sense from those which prevail throughout almost the whole of France. There the people love the revolution, and the privileged classes alone oppose its progress, or rather retard its results. These results are strong and liberal institutions, which time, that wears out all

others, will, on the contrary, tend to consolidate In order to found these institutions upon the ruins of party, there required a conqueror who was also a legislator, and that legislator continuing to be a conqueror. All must unite in the regeneration of a state. To chain down faction, by converting its passions into common interests, is but little,—nothing more, at most, than half the work,—if to these neighbouring interests be not attached. Before we can be master at home, at once happy and glorious there, we must neither be under apprehensions from each other, nor dread the process of erecting a wall of partition. But how is this to be accomplished? First, by reducing all to submission, and then by extending to each a friendly hand, which may secure without humbling. This is the emperor's doctrine, which he has applied to France, which France has devotedly accepted; readily comprehending that a period of transition, of trial, of reparation, could not be an era of enjoyment. 'To-day,' has the emperor often said to me, 'to-day we sow in tears and in blood; hereafter we shall reap glory and liberty.' This is exactly what mercantile selfishness prevents them from understanding at Bordeaux. Altogether opposed to the rest of the empire, the body of the people here oppose the new institutions; they perceive only the temporary obstacle which these institutions present, not to commerce, but to their own particular commerce. What to them imports the good of to-morrow? It is the profit of to-day they want. Some facts have confirmed these observations. While we were on our way to the theatre the *vivas* of the crowd were rare, but within the house the applause was general and continued. The *coup d'œil* of the port is magnificent; all the ships were hung with flags and fired minute guns, to which the forts replied. The whole of the animated, and, despite its discontent, joyous population, the variety of sounds, songs, movements, and costumes, pre-

sented a delightful sight. We were particularly struck on seeing a southern dance executed by three hundred young persons of both sexes, in small brown jackets, blue pantaloons, red sashes, straw hats turned up with ribands and flowers, who, guided by various instruments, and each with castanets or a tambarine, darted forwards, united, turned, and leaped with equal rapidity and elegance.

"*Bayonne.*—About two leagues from this city the emperor was presented with a spectacle worthy of him. On the declivity of a mountain gently scooped out in different parts of its descent is pitched one of those camps which the foresight of the country has provided for its defenders. It is composed of seven handsome barracks, different in form and aspect, each isolated, surrounded with an orchard in full bearing, a well-stocked poultry-yard, and, at different distances, a greater or less quantity of arable land, where a diversity of soil yields a variety of produce. One side of the mountain is wild, but picturesque, with rocks and plants; the other seems covered with rich tapestry, so varied and numerous are the plots of richly-cultivated ground. The summit is clothed with an ever-verdant forest; and down the centre, in a deep channel, flows a limpid stream, refreshing and fertilizing the whole scene. On this spot the veterans who occupy it gave a fête to the emperor, which was at once military and rural. The wives, daughters, and little children of these brave men formed the most pleasing, as they were themselves the noblest, ornament of the festival. Amid piles of arms were seen beautiful shrubs covered with flowers; while the echoes of the mountain resounded to the bleating of flocks and the warlike strains of a soldiery intoxicated on thus receiving their chief. The emperor raised this enthusiasm to the highest pitch by sitting down at a table at once quite military and perfectly pastoral, and drinking with these brave fellows, all of whom had risked their lives in

his service. Toasts were given to all that does honour to the French name—'to our native land;' 'to glory;' 'to liberty.' I dare not mention the attentions of which I was the object; they touched me deeply; for I regarded them as proofs of that veneration which France has vowed to the emperor.

"At Bayonne an important personage waited the emperor's arrival, namely, Don Pedro de las Torres, private envoy of Don Juan Escoiquitz, preceptor of the Prince of Asturias. As a consequence of the events of Aranjuez, this latter has been proclaimed under the title of Ferdinand VII.; but the old King Charles, from whom fear had extorted an abdication, now protests against that act. The new monarch pretends that his father, led by the queen, who is in turn the puppet of the Prince of Peace, never has had, and never can have, a will of his own. Meanwhile, the nation, taking the alarm, is divided between two heads. If one party reproach Charles with being wholly devoted to the will of Manuel Godoi, the other imputes to Ferdinand that of acknowledging no principles of action save those dictated to him by Don Juan Escoiquitz. The first, haughty and impertinent, as are all favourites, keeps his master in bondage and the people in humiliation; the second, honey-tongued and wheedling, at once deceives the nation and enslaves his pupil. Both have caused, and still cause, the misfortunes of Spain.

"What, in truth, can be more deplorable than the respective situation of the governors and governed? The former are without confidence, the latter without attachment. Amid these two factions, which may well be termed parricidal, a third has secretly sprung up, which calculates upon, perhaps encourages, their misunderstanding, in order to favour the triumph of liberty. But is ignorant and superstitious Spain prepared to receive this blessing? With her haughty nobles, her bigoted priesthood, her slothful population, how can she execute an enterprise which

supposes the love of equality, the practice of toleration, and an heroic activity?

"These are things which the emperor will have to consider. He is appealed to by all parties as mediator; he arrives among them without knowledge of them, and, as a man, feels perfect impartiality. His enlightened policy will take counsel of necessity; and in this great quarrel, of which he is constituted umpire, will reconcile what is due to the interests of France with what is demanded for the safety of Spain.

"This same Don Pedro de las Torres has not been sent without his errand. Don Juan, his patron, knew that he possessed, some leagues from Bayonne, an extensive farm, on which are bred numerous flocks of merinoes. Thither, under a plausible pretext, we were conducted to-day. After a feast of really rustic magnificence, we made the tour of the possession on foot. At the bottom of a verdant dell, surrounded on all sides by rocks covered with moss and flowers, all of a sudden a picturesque cot appeared lightly suspended on a projecting point of rock, while round it were feeding between seven and eight hundred sheep of the most beautiful breed. We could not restrain a cry of admiration; and upon the emperor addressing him in some compliments, Don Pedro declared that these flocks belonged of right to me. 'The king, my master,' added he, 'knows the empress's taste for rural occupations; and as this species of sheep is little known in France, and will constitute the principal ornament and, consequently, wealth of a farm, he entreats her not to deprive herself of an offering at once so useful and so agreeable.' —'Don Pedro,' replied the emperor, with a tone of severity, 'the empress cannot accept a present save from the hands of the king, and your master is not yet one. Wait, before making your offering, until your own nation and I have decided.' The remainder of the visit was very ceremonious."

Here Josephine's notes on the affairs of Spain terminate. This the reader will with us doubtless regret; for though evidently in some places repeating, as if they were lessons of reverence, the sentiments of Napoleon, in others she shows surprising foresight into the character and fortune of the Spanish people. How well, for instance, does she appreciate the chances of the *third party*,—the friends of Spanish liberty! And is not the truth of that estimate, formed by the wife of Napoleon two-and-twenty years ago, proved now by the question—What became of that third party? Let the dungeons and gibbets of despotism, the rack, and the chains of priestcraft, and the very wilds of a desecrated land, whence these our days have seen them hunted like wild beasts, tell of the Spanish liberals!

Following the emissaries mentioned in the notes arrived the Prince of Asturias, calling himself Ferdinand VII.; coarse and heavy in his exterior, silent, and suspicious, he looked the very bigot he has since proved. Some days afterward the king and queen reached Bayonne. Charles, though a little fat man, had a more kingly air than his son; the queen was a fat, high-coloured, and stern-looking little woman, holding her head very high, speaking very loud, and without grace of any kind, but not destitute of talents. Josephine acquired considerable influence over the Spanish princess, and, by the elegance of her own toilet, appears to have excited a desire of emulating it. The empress, accordingly, sent some of her dresses and attendants to the queen, but without effect; the latter remained the same ungainly figure as before. Their Spanish majesties had brought, not in their train, but in their carriage, the inseparable Prince of Peace. Napoleon treated them with all courtesy, but could not prevail upon himself to extend the same to this minion; consequently, when the royal party entered the dining-room in the château of Marrac, the usher, not finding his name

in the list of guests, detained Godoi in the antechamber. The party had no sooner sat down to table, than Charles, missing *his* prince, called out "Manuel!" turning to Napoleon, and adding, in a whine of entreaty, "and Manuel too, sire?"—"Oh, ay," replied the latter, with a half-suppressed smile of contempt, "I had forgotten;" and, making a sign to an officer of the household, "introduce the Prince of Peace."

Meanwhile, Murat continued to play his fooleries as *regent-expectant* in Madrid; but on the 7th of June, *King Joseph* arrived at Bayonne on his way to the capital. Upon the contest that followed, Josephine ever looked with alarm and distrust; the present visit had taught her how to penetrate the secret of the Spanish character, and the instinctive feeling already noticed of whatever menaced her husband's real glory rendered her more than usually apprehensive concerning the result. It is an exercise, likewise, far from being devoid of interest, to compare, with the facts before us, the opinion she had formed of Napoleon, in relation to this very fear, in the beginning of 1811, when she had ceased to be Empress of France, and when, by one vigorous effort, he might have scattered all opposition. Addressing her ladies, Josephine said, "Napoleon is persuaded that he is to subjugate all the nations of the earth. He cherishes such a confidence in his *star*, that should he be abandoned to-morrow by family and allies, a wanderer and proscribed, he would support life, convinced he should triumph over all obstacles, and accomplish his destiny by realizing his mighty designs. Happily," added the empress, with a smile, for as yet all smiled upon him, "we shall never have an opportunity of ascertaining whether I am right; but of this you may rest assured, Napoleon is more courageous morally than physically. I know him better than any one does; he believes himself predestined, and would support reverses with as much calmness

as the daring with which he confronts danger in combat." It may, perhaps, be thought, adds our authority (Madame Decres.), that the above is my own invention; but I attest the *exact truth* of the whole.

The actual connexion of Josephine with Spain, however, ended with her excursion; whence, after travelling northward through the central districts of France, she returned to St. Cloud in time for the rejoicings on the 15th of August, the emperor's birthday. At this favourite residence, only a few days before departing for the interview at Erfurth, on the 27th of September, Napoleon, with Josephine and their usual familiars, played a final game at the old amusement of "prisoners." It was dark night before the party finished, and footmen with torches were in attendance to give light to the players. The effect could not be otherwise than full of interest; the blaze of the torches, now throwing bold, broad, and rich illumination upon the illustrious group as they assembled in front of the château preparatory to each run, again flinging scattered and flickering lights upon the lawn, the trees, flowers, and rich dresses of the ladies, as the torch-bearers dispersed, following irregularly the course of the runners. How closely resembling the lives of some of the noblest there,—this crossing, commingling, disappearing, sometimes in light, anon in darkness; here, all starting away amid brightness and expectation; there, a figure outstripping all others, only to be lost in gloom! But there was then no moralizing; all were joyous, and, for the moment, artless, as if it had not been a court. Napoleon, as usual, fell, though only once, as he was running for Josephine. Being thus taken captive, he was placed in *ban*, which he broke as soon as he recovered breath, set again to running, and released the empress amid loud huzzas from his own, and shouts of "fair play" from the opposite party. Thus ended the last repetition of youthful sports.

Josephine did not accompany Napoleon to Erfurth. In this the latter showed his usual tact; it suited his views to be on the most familiar and intimate footing with Alexander (the Russian even borrowed linen of the French autocrat); and the presence of the empress would necessarily have required reserve and ceremony. We have therefore little to do with this really interesting passage in the life of Napoleon, which recalls more nearly than any event in modern history our ancient recollections of "the field of the cloth of gold," and other chivalrous meetings of the sovereigns of the olden time. The following incident, however, is of so singular a nature, so well authenticated, and at the same time new, we believe, to the English reader, that it may well find a place here. The most celebrated actors of the French theatre were assembled, and nightly representations given at Erfurth; the two emperors, seated side by side, occupied each an armchair, on a platform erected on the usual station of the orchestra, on account of Alexander's weak hearing. The pit was filled with the *crowd of kings*. On the 3d of October, Voltaire's *Œdipe* being the play, when Talma repeated the verse,

L'amitie d'un grand homme est un bienfait des dieux,*

Alexander rose, and gracefully presented his hand to Napoleon. The compliment was instantly appreciated, and loud acclamations burst from all parts of the royal and princely audience. On the same evening, Napoleon retired to rest at the usual hour, every access to his bedroom being secured by guards and bolts, with the ordinary precautions. About two o'clock, Constant, who, with Roustan, the Mameluke, slept in the antechamber, upon a mattress spread across the only doorway of the imperial dormitory, was awaked by an alarming noise from

* The friendship of a great man is a blessing from the gods.

within. Rousing his companion, the two listened together, when the sounds were repeated, falling distinctly upon the ear, like the gurglings of a man in the agonies of strangulation. Roustan silently seized his weapon, and Constant, taking the light, cautiously opened the door. No one was visible in the bed-chamber; but low moanings were still heard, as if from one nearly exhausted in a struggle. Advancing, they beheld Napoleon stretched across the bed, his eyes closed, lips drawn back, and showing clenched teeth; the one hand was pressed against the breast, the other extended, as if grasping at some invisible antagonist. Constant with difficulty roused the sleeper. "What is it?—what is it?" cried Napoleon, sitting up, and casting a bewildered gaze on the figures before him, of themselves (one bearing a dim lamp, the other a drawn scimitar) enough to create alarm. Constant hastened to explain. "Thou hast done well, my faithful Constant," interrupted Napoleon. "Ah! what a fearful dream! I thought a bear was devouring my vitals." So strong remained the impression of the dream, that Napoleon, as he stated next morning, could not again sleep. Even after a long interval of time he recurred to the subject. Did he think of his dream during the Russian expedition?

On returning from Erfurth, Napoleon remained only a few days with Josephine at St. Cloud, when he set out for Spain, leaving her behind, notwithstanding more urgent entreaties to be taken with him than she had ever before ventured. Their adieus were most affectionate, but mournful on the part of the empress; for she could not divest herself of a presentiment of misfortune, from the character of the nation and enterprise with which he was now engaged. Denied the satisfaction of discharging that duty in person, she sent for his favourite attendants, recommending them to have the utmost watchfulness over their master's safety. These

gloomy forebodings seemed for the time groundless. After a campaign of little more than two months, Napoleon returned to her on the 23d of January, 1809, leaving Spain with not an English soldier in the Peninsula, and its perfect conquest requiring only to be consolidated.

The interval which elapsed between the return from Madrid and the 13th of April, when he set out for the second campaign of Vienna, Napoleon passed chiefly at St. Cloud, with an occasional hunting excursion to Rambouillet. But though he continued to pass in Josephine's society all his hours of leisure, these had now become extremely few; and perhaps at no time had his application been so intense, as in preparing for the campaign of 1809. The final period of Josephine's married happiness was now drawing to a close. The last of unrestrained and affectionate intercourse which she enjoyed with him whom she had loved so well, for whose sake she had done and suffered so much, took place during their excursion to Strasburg, whither she had accompanied Napoleon on his way to Germany. Here the empress remained for some time, attended by the Queen of Westphalia, an amiable woman, whom she greatly esteemed, Hortense and her children, the Princess Stephanie and her husband, all of whom had affectionately hastened to cheer the solitude of the empress, until her return to Paris, as regent, became necessary.

Meanwhile, Napoleon was pursuing, though with less than usual celerity, his adventurous career. But the details of the last Austrian campaign, the battles of Ratisbon, Vienna, Esseling, and Wagram, are fully given in other works.* In October, the treaty of Schoenbrunn closed the contest, to the advantage of Napoleon, but the war had cost many brave men to France, had been unpopular there, and

* See Life of Napoleon.—*Family Library*, Nos. IV. and V.

became, in the end, one main cause of all his future misfortunes, by placing an Austrian princess on the throne of Josephine. The observations of Marshal Lannes, who fell at Esseling, and whom some writers have, with cruel absurdity, represented as rushing out of life like a boisterous ruffian and blasphemer, expressed on these subjects the sentiments of the whole French army. The evening before his death, which happened after eight days of agony, endured with fortitude and resignation, he said to an attendant, "I feel myself dying. Tell the emperor I would see him once more." The messenger was about to leave the wretched hut in which the "veteran of forty" lay, when Napoleon himself entered. All withdrew, leaving the companions in arms alone together; but the door in the partition, which separated the two divisions of the cabin, remaining open, allowed their conversation to be heard. Lannes, speaking at first with difficulty, as much from reluctance as weakness, recounted his services; then in a more assured tone, proceeded:—"I do not speak thus to excite your interest for my family. Your own glory calls upon you to protect my wife and children; but my services give me a right to express the truth, and I have no fear that my using the privilege now will influence hereafter your dispositions towards them. You have committed a great fault in provoking the present war. It has deprived you of your best friend; but it will not correct you Your ambition is insatiable, and will prove your destruction. You recklessly throw away, and without necessity, the lives of the men who serve you most faithfully; and when they die, you do not regret them. You retain none but flatterers near your person; and I no longer see a single friend who dares to tell you the truth. You will be betrayed and forsaken. Curb your disposition for war It is the general wish. You can never be mor

powerful; but you may be much less beloved. Pardon a dying man these truths; for that man loved you." The marshal ceased, and extended his hand to his leader, who bathed it in silent tears; for he could not speak. Fortunate would it have been for all had he laid the advice to heart.

This exhortation of the brave Lannes both explains the causes, and in some measure leads us to anticipate the consequences, of the divorce,—a painful portion of our narrative now to be discussed. The restless ambition of Napoleon, utterly selfish in its object, and pursued as it was by the most unfeeling means, led him at last to sacrifice the wife of his youth, her by whom he had risen, who, unchanged amid every diversity of fortune, had bound him to herself by every tie of honour, of gratitude, and affection. The flatterers by whom he was surrounded urged him on in this career of selfishness, while every battle that swept off an ancient comrade deprived him of a real friend, and poor Josephine of a support. Again, as respects consequences, thenceforth the zeal of those who had served him most faithfully became slackened, when they beheld the woman to whom he owed all sacrificed with cold, calculating contrivance, conceiving justly that they in like manner would be superseded, as caprice, interest, or passion dictated. To Josephine, also, the army was attached by a species of chivalry; she had been associated in the distribution of their most splendid honours; to many, in her various excursions, she had with her own hand given the "Cross of the Legion." The most distinguished military leaders who survived, of the first companions of Napoleon, were likewise the early friends of Josephine: several among them had actually been attached to his standard through her influence; and there were few but could associate their first triumphs with the recollection of her graceful commendations, and grateful acknowledgment of their services.

Had Lannes, for instance, survived, it is certain he would have protested with all the honest energy of his character against the degradation of the empress, to whose interests he was attached, both by his own feelings and those of his wife, one of Josephine's most favoured ladies. The same tie bound others, who, though silent, were not therefore reconciled Finally, to the French people, Josephine had not only recommended herself by dignity in her high station, moderation, and unceasing exertions in the cause of benevolence, but in her elevation, connected as she was with their ancient nobility, they beheld a Frenchwoman on the throne, and in this consideration, soothing to their national pride, there existed a bond between them and Napoleon, which was snapped by the separation. Not without truth, therefore, has the commencement of his downfall been traced from the proceedings so painful to her, which we are now to describe.

The Austrian campaign, and the consequent diplomatic arrangements, having been concluded, Napoleon set out on his return from Schoenbrunn, a palace in the neighbourhood of Vienna, on the 16th of October. From Munich, where he made a short halt, a courier was despatched to the empress, with information that he would reach Fontainbleau on the evening of the 27th, and directing the court to assemble there in readiness to meet him. Such was the speed of his subsequent movements, however, that he arrived at ten in the morning of the 26th. The consequent disappointment of finding no one to receive him, though a circumstance to be expected, threw the emperor into a passion; and seeing the poor courier who had preceded him preparing to dismount, he called out, "You can rest to-morrow—gallop to St. Cloud, and announce my arrival to the empress." He continued in bad humour all day. About five in the afternoon—for the distance between St. Cloud and Fontainbleau is upwards of

forty miles—a carriage arrived in the court; supposing it to be Josephine's, he hastily ran down to receive her, but was again disappointed. "And the empress?" exclaimed he in a tone of impatient surprise, seeing only her ladies.—"Sire, we precede by a quarter of an hour at most."—"A happy arrangement," said he, turning on his heel, and again ascended to the little library, where he had previously been at work.

At length, about six, Josephine arrived; Napoleon, hearing the carriage, demanded who had come; and, though informed, continued to write, without going down to receive the empress,—the first time according to the observation of his attendants, he had ever acted thus. Josephine, unconscious of a fault, alive only to the present satisfaction of seeing her husband after his long absence, and exposure to so many dangers, hastily entered the little library. What a chilling reception to one so gentle, so affectionate! Napoleon merely raised his eyes from some papers, without stirring from his place, with the salutation, "Ah! so you are come, madam. 'Tis well. I was just about to set out for St. Cloud." The empress, in astonishment, attempted to explain, that all had been regulated according to his orders; he replied in terms which brought tears into her eyes, and she stood for a moment weeping silently. Napoleon's heart smote him; he rose, acknowledged he was wrong, the two spouses tenderly embraced, and Josephine retired to dress. Meanwhile, the ministers of the marine and finance, who had been sent for in the morning, were announced; business recommenced; and in about half an hour the empress reappeared, dressed with perfect elegance, in a polonaise of white satin, bordered with eider-down, and, though the evening was cold, wearing only a wreath of blue flowers entwined with silver ears of corn in her hair; she had studied Napoleon's taste; and he interrupted his work to look upon her, with

an expression of fondness, which Josephine perceiving, asked, with a smile, "You do not think I have spent too much time at my toilet?" Napoleon playfully pointed to the *pendule* on the chimney-piece, which showed half past seven, rose, gave his hand to the empress, and addressing his ministers, "Gentlemen, in five minutes I shall be with you," prepared to leave the apartment. "But," said Josephine, whom no circumstances could render indifferent to the wants or feelings of others, "these gentlemen cannot have dined, since they have only just arrived from Paris?" The ministers sat down to table with their majesties, but the repast did not continue above a few minutes, for Napoleon appeared anxious to finish the business in which they had been engaged, though he had taken nothing save a little chocolate in the morning. Throughout the whole of the day he had discovered impatience, restlessness, and disquietude; but on joining the empress's party in the evening, he appeared more than usually cheerful and attentive, as if desirous of removing all impression of previous unkindness.

Such was the slight difference which writers have magnified into the cause of the divorce. That measure depended on resolutions more deeply laid and more sternly pursued. What passed after these personages, so unhappy in the midst of greatness, had retired together, is unknown; but from the morning of the 27th, it was evident that they lived in a state of constant restraint and mutual observation. While at Fontainbleau, this painful situation became still more distressing, from the comparative solitude of the parties. At Paris, to which they occasionally made visits, chiefly out of compliment to the King of Saxony, who arrived there on the 14th of November, matters wore externally an appearance of usual ease. Again the court returned to Fontainbleau, and again life became wearisome, tedious, and artificial;

Napoleon scarcely venturing to look upon Josephine, save when he was not observed; while she hung upon every glance, and trembled at every word, at the same time that both endeavoured to be composed and natural in their demeanour before the courtiers. But these, like the domestics of humbler establishments, are quick-sighted to detect any change of condition in their superiors; nor was it one of the least of Josephine's troubles to be exposed to their ingratitude. "In what self-constraint," said she, "did I pass the period during which, though no longer his wife, I was obliged to appear so to all eyes! Ah! what looks are those which courtiers suffer to fall upon a repudiated wife!" The circumstance which, more than all the rest, excited the suspicion of others and the alarm of Josephine was, the shutting up, by the emperor's command, of the private access between their apartments. Formerly, as already described, in their days of happiness, their intercourse had thus been free, even amid the restraints of a court. Napoleon would surprise Josephine in her boudoir, and she steal upon his moments of relaxation in his cabinet. But all was now reversed; the former never entered, but knocked when he would speak to the latter, who hardly dared to obey the signal, the sound of which caused such violent palpitations of the heart, that she had to support herself by leaning against the walls or furniture as she tottered towards the little door, on the other side of which Napoleon waited her approach. From these conferences Josephine returned so exhausted, and with eyes so swollen with weeping, as to give ground for the belief that her lord used violence to constrain her consent to their separation. Her own words, also, "He accomplished his resolution with a cruelty of which no idea can be formed," might at first seem to countenance this supposition. But justice is to be done; the violence and the cruelty, great as they both were consisted solely in the act itself, and in

coldly withstanding all claims of affection and of gentle entreaty urged by the being who had loved him so well, and at length tendered a voluntary sacrifice of her love and happiness. During their private conferences, previous to the direct announcement of his determination, Napoleon endeavoured to persuade Josephine of the political necessity and advantages of a separation, at first rather hinting at than disclosing the measure. His true object was, as much to effect his wish with the least possible pain to the empress, as to lead her to a resignation of her state; for though she could not have successfully resisted a despotic enactment, the deed would thereby have been rendered doubly odious to all France. This, indeed, was but too obviously a preparation for an event, though future, yet certain; and Josephine, regarding it as such, defended her claims sometimes with a strength of argument which it was difficult to answer, and at others by tears, supplications, and appeals, or by the calm resignation of self-devotedness to his will, against which the heart of Napoleon, had he possessed the feelings of a man, ought never to have been proof. Meanwhile, "in what stupor" —the words are Josephine's own—"in what uncertainty, more cruel than death, did I live during these discussions, until the fatal day in which he avowed the resolution which I had so long read in his countenance." Sometimes, however, rallying amid her sorrows and resignation, she assumed a commanding attitude on those mysterious principles by which he deemed his career to be regulated, that for a space awed even the spirit of Napoleon. One night, Josephine, in tears and silence, had listened for some time to these overtures and discussions, when, with a sudden energy, she started up, drew Napoleon to the window, and, pointing to the heavens, whose lights seemed in placid sweetness to look down upon her distress, with a firm, yet melancholy tone, said, "Bonaparte, behold that bright star; it is mine! and

remember, to mine, not to thine, has sovereignty been promised. Separate, then, our fates, and your star fades!"

But "the fatal day" was not to be averted. The 30th of November arrived, which Napoleon appears to have destined for declaring his final determination to Josephine. She had wept all day; they were to dine together as usual, and, to conceal her tears, the empress wore a large white hat, fastened under the chin, which, with its deep front, shaded the whole of the upper part of the face. Napoleon, also, had shown marks of the strongest agitation; he scarcely spoke to any one, but, with arms folded, continued at intervals to pace his library alone. From time to time a convulsive movement, attended with a hectic flush, passed for an instant across his features; and at table, when he raised his eye, it was only to look by stealth upon the empress, with an expression of the deepest regret. The dinner was removed untouched; neither tasted a morsel; and the only use to which Napoleon turned his knife was, to strike mechanically upon the edge of his glass, which he appeared to do unconsciously, and like one whose thoughts were painfully preoccupied. Every thing during this sad repast seemed to presage the impending catastrophe. The officers of the court, even, who were in attendance, stood in motionless expectancy, like men who look upon a sight they feel portends evil, though what they know not. Not a sound was heard beyond the noise of placing and removing the untasted viands and the monotonous tinkling already noticed; for the emperor spoke only once to ask a question, without giving any attention to the reply. "We dined together as usual," says Josephine; "I struggled with my tears, which, notwithstanding every effort, overflowed from my eyes; I uttered not a single word during that sorrowful meal, and he broke silence but once, to ask an attendant about the weather. My sunshine, I say, had passed

away; the storm burst quickly. Directly after coffee, Bonaparte dismissed every one, and I remained alone with him." We have already described the manner of Napoleon's taking coffee after dinner; the change which on this day first took place seemed to indicate to Josephine that her cares were no longer indispensable to the happiness of her husband. She had risen as usual from table with Napoleon, whom she slowly followed into the saloon, and with a handkerchief pressed upon her mouth to restrain the sobbing which, though inaudible, shook her whole frame. Recovering by an effort her self-command, Josephine prepared to pour out the coffee, when Napoleon, advancing to the page, performed the office for himself, casting upon her a regard remarked even by the attendants, and which seemed to fall with stunning import, for she remained as if stupified. The emperor, having drunk, returned the cup to the page, and, by a sign, indicated his wish to be alone, shutting with his own hand the door of the saloon. In the dining-room, separated by this door, there remained only the Count de Beaumont, chief chamberlain, who continued to walk about in silence, and the favourite personal attendant of the emperor; both expecting some terrible event,—an apprehension which was but too speedily confirmed by loud screams from the saloon.

We know, from Josephine's own words, what passed during this secret interview. "I watched in the changing expression of his countenance that struggle which was in his soul. At length his features settled into stern resolve. I saw that my hour was come. His whole frame trembled, he approached, and I felt a shuddering horror come over me. He took my hand, placed it upon his heart, gazed upon me for a moment, then pronounced these fearful words:—'Josephine! my excellent Josephine! thou knowest if I have loved thee! To thee —to thee alone do I owe the only moments of hap-

piness which I have enjoyed in this world. Josephine! my destiny overmasters my will. My dearest affections must be silent before the interests of France!'—'Say no more,' I had still strength sufficient to reply; 'I was prepared for this, but the blow is not less mortal.' More I could not utter. I cannot tell what passed within me. I believe my screams were loud. I thought reason had fled. I became unconscious of every thing, and, on returning to my senses, found I had been carried to my chamber."

When Josephine thus fainted, Napoleon hastily opened the door of the saloon, and called to the two individuals who remained in the dining-room. The opening of the door allowed them to see the empress on the floor, insensible, yet still speaking in broken murmurs: "Oh, no, you cannot surely do it!—you would not kill me!" M. de Beaumont entered, on a sign from his master, and lifted in his arms the hapless Josephine, now perfectly unconscious of all that was passing. The emperor himself, taking a taper from the chimneypiece, lighted the way through a dark passage, whence there was a private stair to the empress's sleeping-room. At first he had merely said that she had had a nervous attack; but in his increasing agitation allowed some expressions to escape, whence the count first clearly perceived the nature of Josephine's calamity. When they had thus attained the private staircase, it appeared too steep and narrow for M. de Beaumont, unassisted, to attempt to bear the empress down with safety. Napoleon then called the keeper of the portfolio, whose duty it was to be in constant attendance at the door of the cabinet, which also opened upon the corridor. Giving the taper to this attendant, and directing him to precede, the emperor himself supported Josephine's limbs, and, descending last, the party thus attained the door of her bedroom. Here Napoleon dismissed both his companions, and, laying the

empress on the bed, rung for her women, who, on entering, found him hanging over her with an expression of the deepest anxiety. Several times during the night he returned personally to inquire concerning her situation, but, except on these occasions, maintained unbroken silence. "On recovering," says Josephine, "I perceived that Corvisart was in attendance, and my poor daughter weeping over me. No, no! I cannot describe the horror of my situation during that night! Even the interest which *he* affected to take in my sufferings seemed to me additional cruelty. Oh, my God! how justly had I reason to dread becoming an empress!"

The following is a letter addressed by Josephine to her husband a few days after these events, less in the hope of withdrawing him from his resolution than with the intention of proving her resignation to an arrangement proceeding from him:—

"My presentiments are realized. You have pronounced the word which separates us; the rest is only a formality. Such is the reward—I will not say of so many sacrifices (they were sweet, because made for you)—but of an attachment unbounded on my part, and of the most solemn oaths on yours. But the state, whose interests you put forward as a motive, will, it is said, indemnify me, by justifying you! These interests, however, to which you feign to immolate me, are but a pretext; your ill-dissembled ambition, as it has been, so it will ever continue, the guide of your life;—a guide which has led you to victories and to a throne, and which now urges you to disasters and to ruin.

"You speak of an alliance to contract—of an heir to be given to your empire—of a dynasty to be founded! But with whom do you contract that alliance? With the natural enemy of France—that insidious house of Austria—which detests our country from feeling, system, and necessity. Do you

suppose that the hatred, so many proofs of which have been manifested, especially during the last fifty years, has not been transferred from the kingdom to the empire; and that the descendants of Maria Theresa, that able sovereign, who purchased from Madame Pompadour the fatal treaty of 1756, mentioned by yourself only with horror,—think you, I ask, that her posterity, while they inherit her power, are not animated also by her spirit? I do nothing more than repeat what I have heard from you a thousand times; but then your ambition limited itself to humbling a power which now you propose to elevate. Believe me, so long as you shall be master of Europe, Austria will be submissive to you;—but never know reverse!

"As to the want of an heir, must a mother appear to you prejudiced in speaking of a son? Can I—ought I to be silent respecting him who constitutes my whole joy, and on whom once centred all your hopes? The adoption of the 2d January, 1806, was, then, a political falsehood? But there is one reality, at least; the talents and virtues of my Eugene are no illusion. How many times have you pronounced their eulogium! What do I say? Have you not deemed them worthy of the possession of a throne as a recompense, and often said they deserved more? Alas! France has repeated the same; but what to you are the wishes of France?

"I do not here speak of the person destined to succeed me, nor do you expect that I should mention her. Whatever I might say on that subject would be liable to suspicion. But one thing you will never suspect,—the vow which I form for your happiness. May that felicity at least recompense me for my sorrows. Ah! great it will be if proportionate to them!"

During the interval in which this letter was written, namely, from the private announcement of the divorce as above described to the 16th of December,

the most splendid public rejoicings took place on the anniversary of the coronation, and in commemoration of the victories of the German campaign. At all these Josephine appeared in the pomp and circumstance of station, and even with a smiling countenance, while her heart was breaking. Of all the distressing circumstances connected with her sorrows, this was one of the most painful. To the public deception to which she thus became innocently accessory was added the humbling consciousness, that among sovereigns and princes then assembled in Paris, especially the members and creatures of the Bonaparte family, while few were ignorant of, some secretly rejoiced in, her impending disgrace. The last time she appeared in grand costume in public was upon the occasion of the fête given by the municipality of Paris, in receiving the honours of which her habitual grace and affability never for a moment forsook her, though the languor depicted on her own and her daughter's countenance too clearly discovered some latent sorrow within. A few days after, Eugene arrived from Italy, whence he had been summoned on this melancholy duty. The conduct of her children, and especially of her son, has been misrepresented, as if the latter had laboured to persuade the empress to consent to a divoree, against which, both as a woman and a princess, she was prepared to oppose every obstacle. Her struggles we have already described; and only by her own remonstrances were her children prevented from at once abandoning all and following their mother into Italy, where, and not in France, it was first proposed she should in future reside. Eugene's first interview was with his mother; afterward he saw Napoleon, who replied to his question as to the final certainty of the divorce by tenderly pressing his hand. "Sire, in that case, permit me to quit your service."—"How!" interrupted the emperor, "would you, Eugene Beauharnais, my adopted son, leave me?"—

"Yes, sire; the son of her who is no longer empress cannot remain viceroy. I will follow my mother into her retreat. She must now find her consolation in her children."—"Eugene, you know the stern necessity which urges this measure: yet you will quit me. Who, then, should I have a son, the object of my desires and preserver of my interests,—who would watch over the child when I am absent? If I die, who will prove to him a father? who will bring him up? who is to make a man of him?" Napoleon is represented as having had tears in his eyes on pronouncing these words. Eugene was also greatly moved, and they retired together. The self-denying devotion of Josephine carried her even so far, as not only to persuade her children to witness her own renouncement of the crown, but to be present at the coronation of her successor. "The emperor," said she, "is your benefactor, your more than father, to whom you are indebted for every thing, and, therefore, owe a boundless obedience." Her own example furnished a most affecting illustration of this sentiment. The Emperor of Austria, at the request of his daughter, had directed inquiries to be made respecting the religious ceremonial of marriage between Napoleon and Josephine, as already described. Maria Louisa had declared that she would, after such marriage, regard an alliance with the French emperor as a sacrilegious union. Josephine evaded the consequence by referring to the *Moniteur*, where she knew the religious celebration had not been inserted.

"The fatal day" at length arrived. On the 15th of December, the imperial council of state was convened, and for the first time officially informed of the intended separation. On the morrow, the whole of the imperial family assembled in the grand saloon at the Tuileries. All were in grand costume. Napoleon's was the only countenance which betrayed emotion, but ill concealed by the drooping plumes

of his hat of ceremony. He stood motionless as a statue; his arms crossed upon his breast, without uttering a single word. The members of his family were seated around, showing in their expression less of sympathy with so painful a scene than of satisfaction that one was to be removed who had so long held influence, gently exerted as it had been, over their brother. In the centre of the apartment was placed an armchair, and before it a small table, with a writing apparatus of gold. All eyes were directed to that spot, when a door opened, and Josephine, pale, but calm, appeared, leaning on the arm of her daughter, whose fast-falling tears showed that she had not attained the resignation of her mother. Both were dressed in the simplest manner. Josephine's dress, of white muslin, exhibited not a single ornament. All rose on her entrance. She moved slowly and with wonted grace to the seat prepared for her, and, her head supported on her hand, with the elbow resting on the table, listened to the reading of the act of separation. Behind her chair stood Hortense, whose sobs were audible; and a little farther on, towards Napoleon, Eugene, trembling, as if incapable of supporting himself. Josephine heard in composure, but with tears coursing each other down her cheeks, the words that placed an eternal barrier between her and greatness, and, bitterer still, between affection and its object. This painful duty over, the empress appeared to acquire a degree of resolution from the very effort to resign with dignity the realities of title for ever. Pressing for an instant the handkerchief to her eyes, she rose, and with a voice which, but for a slight tremor, might have been called firm, pronounced the oath of acceptance; then, sitting down, she took the pen from the hand of Count St. Jean-d'Angely, and signed. The mother and daughter now retired as they had entered, followed immediately by Eugene, who appears to have suffered most severely of the three; for he

had no sooner gained the space between the folding-doors which opened into the private cabinet than he fell lifeless on the floor, and was recovered, not without difficulty, by the attentions of the usher of the cabinet and his own aids-de-camp.

The sad interests of the day had not yet been exhausted. Josephine had remained unseen, sorrowing in her chamber, till Napoleon's usual hour of retiring to rest. He had just placed himself in bed, silent and melancholy, while his favourite attendant waited only to receive orders, when suddenly the private door opened, and the empress appeared, her hair in disorder, and her face swollen with weeping. Advancing with a tottering step, she stood, as if irresolute, about a pace from the bed, clasped her hands, and burst into an agony of tears. Delicacy —a feeling as if she had now no right to be there— seemed at first to have arrested her progress; but forgetting every thing in the fulness of her grief, she threw herself on the bed, clasped her husband's neck, and sobbed as if her heart had been breaking. Napoleon also wept while he endeavoured to console her, and they remained for some time locked in each other's arms, silently mingling their tears together, until the emperor, perceiving Constant in waiting, dismissed him to the antechamber. After an interview of about an hour, Josephine parted for ever with the man whom she had so long and so tenderly loved. On seeing the empress retire, which she did still in tears, the attendant entered to remove the lights, and found the chamber silent as death, and Napoleon so sunk among the bedclothes as to be invisible. Next morning he still showed the marks of suffering, as throughout the whole of these afflicting transactions. At eleven Josephine was to bid adieu to the Tuileries, never to enter the palace more. The whole household assembled on the stairs and in the vestibule, in order to obtain a last look of a mistress whom they had loved, and who,

to use an expression of one present, "carried with her into exile the hearts of all that had enjoyed the happiness of access to her presence." Josephine appeared, leaning on the arm of one of her ladies, and veiled from head to foot. She held a handkerchief to her eyes, and moved forward amid silence, at first uninterrupted, but to which almost immediately succeeded a universal burst of grief. Josephine, though not insensible to this proof of attachment, spoke not; but, instantly entering a close carriage with six horses, drove rapidly away, without casting one look backwards on the scene of past greatness and de parted happiness.

Henceforward, Josephine's life passed alternately at Malmaison and Navarre, and, gliding away in an equal tenor of benevolent exertion and elegant employment, offers but few incidents. A description of one day is the account of all. The villa of Malmaison, to which she first retired, from its vicinity to Paris, might be regarded as her residence of ceremony. Here she received the visits, almost the homage, of the members of the court of Napoleon and Maria Louisa; for it was quickly discovered, that however unpleasant they might be to her new rival, such visits were recommendations to the emperor's favour. A little after nine these receptions took place, and from the visiters of the morning were retained, or previously invited, some ten or twelve guests to breakfast at eleven. From the personages present being always among the most distinguished in Parisian society, and appearing only in uniform or official costume, these morning parties were equally agreeable and brilliant. After breakfast, the empress adjourned to the saloon, where she conversed for about an hour, or walked in the delightfu gallery adjoining, which contained many of the masterpieces of painting and sculpture. Of these, a few were ancient, but the greater number were the works of living artists, the most distinguished of whom

were not without obligations to the patronage of Josephine; and while Gros, Girodet, Guerin, with their pencils, Spontini, Mehul, Paër, Boiedlieu, with their voice or lyre, Fontanes, Arnault, Andrieu, Lemercier, with their pen or conversation, and Canova, with his chisel, adorned the gallery or the parties of Malmaison, they ranked among the personal friends of the mistress of the retreat. The arrival of the carriages was the signal for the departure of the morning visiters; and after a drive of a couple of hours in the park, the empress and her suite retired to dress for dinner, to which never less than from twelve to fifteen strangers sat down. The evening passed in amusement, conversation, and music, and was always very gay, owing to the number of visiters from Paris. At eleven, tea, ices, and sweetmeats were served, and at midnight the empress retired. The apartments in which these reunions took place were elegant and spacious, the furniture being covered with needlework, on a ground of white silk, wrought by the empress and her ladies; but the residence altogether was small, an inconvenience still further increased through Josephine's veneration of every thing that had been Napoleon's. The apartment which he had occupied remained exactly as he had left it; she would not suffer even a chair to be moved, and, indeed, very rarely permitted any one to enter, keeping the key herself, and dusting the articles with her own hands. On the table was a volume of history, with the page doubled down where he had finished reading; beside it lay a pen, with the ink dried on the point, and a map of the world, on which he was accustomed to point out his plans to those in his confidence, and which still showed on its surface many marks of his impatience. These Josephine would allow to be touched on no account. By the wall stood Napoleon's camp-bed, without curtains; and above continued to hang such of his arms as he had placed

by beautiful streams and intersected by lakes, which, being partly artificial, had become putrescent marshes from the neglect of the watercourses. A million francs (41,600*l.*), advanced by Napoleon on her retired allowance, were expended in the first instance; the marshes were drained, the roads through the forest repaired, public buildings erected; by which means, with planting and agriculture, Josephine enjoyed the satisfaction of spreading comfort and fertility over a neighbourhood where formerly reigned extreme misery.

At Navarre Josephine lived a much more retired and, to her, more agreeable mode of life, because freer from etiquette, than at Malmaison. Though almost never without visiters of the highest rank, and though constantly surrounded with all the pomp and attendance of a court, her courtiers were for the most part old and valued friends, with whom she lived rather in society than as mistress and dependants. The following was the general plan of the day:—At ten o'clock breakfast was served; and it was the duty of the ladies and chamberlains in attendance to be in the saloon to receive her majesty, who was exact to a minute in all such arrangements. "I have never," she used to say, "kept any one waiting for me half a minute, when to be punctual depended on myself. Punctuality is true politeness, especially in the great." From the saloon the empress immediately passed into the breakfast-room, followed by her court, according to their rank; naming herself those who were to sit on her right and left. Both at breakfast and dinner the repast consisted of one course only, every thing except the dessert being placed on the table at once. The empress had five attendants behind her chair, and those who sat down with her one each. Seven officials of different ranks performed the ordinary service of the table. After breakfast, which was never prolonged beyond three-quarters of an hour, the empress, with her ladies, retired to a long room named the

gallery, adorned with pictures and statues, and commanding a beautiful prospect, where they continued to employ themselves in various elegant or useful works, while the chamberlain in attendance read aloud to the party. At two, when the weather permitted, the ladies rode out in three open carriages, each with four horses, Madame d'Arberg, lady of honour, one of the ladies in waiting, and a distinguished visiter always accompanying the empress. In this manner passed two hours in examining improvements, and freely conversing with every one who desired any thing, when the party returned, and all had the disposal of their time till six o'clock, the hour of dinner. This repast concluded, the evening, till eleven, was dedicated to relaxation, the empress playing at backgammon, piquet, or casino with the personages of her household, or guests whom she named for that honour, or conversing generally with the whole circle. When strangers were present, no money was played for; but at other times, a small sum served to give interest to the game. The younger ladies, whether members of the household or visiters, of whom there were always several, often many, whose education Josephine thus completed by retaining them near her person, usually adjourned to a small saloon off the drawing-room, where a harp and piano invited either to music or the dance under the control of some experienced matron. Sometimes, however, this slight restraint was forgotten, and the noise of the juvenile party somewhat incommoded their seniors in the grand apartment. On these occasions, the lady of honour, who had the charge of the whole establishment, and was, moreover, a strict disciplinarian, would hint the necessity of repressing the riot; but Josephine always opposed this. "Suffer, my dear Madame d'Arberg," she would say, "both them and us to enjoy, while we may, that delightful innocency of mirth which comes from the heart and goes to the heart." At eleven, tea was served, and the visiters retired; but

the empress generally remained for an hour longer, conversing with her ladies. "These conversations," says one who frequently bore a part in them, "afforded the best means of judging of the strength of her understanding and the goodness of her heart She loved to give herself up, without reserve, to the pleasure of this confidential intercourse, but would sometimes check herself in the midst of an interesting recital, observing, 'I know that every thing I say is reported to the emperor, a circumstance extremely disagreeable, not in itself so much as in the consequent restraint which it imposes.' Napoleon, in fact, had intelligence within a few hours of every thing which was done or said at Malmaison and Navarre. I know not that the member of our circle who thus played the spy was ever suspected, but certain it is, such an official existed." On this subject, we may remark, that the same system prevailed also at St. Cloud and the Tuileries; but what was most singular, besides the regular *police* established by Napoleon and Josephine for mutual surveillance, some one member of the court had gratuitously assumed the office of secret reporter. Within a few hours the emperor or empress received information of whatever had occurred of a particular nature in the conduct of either, which the one might be deemed desirous of concealing from the other. These communications came by the ordinary letter-office attached to the palaces, were evidently by the same hand, and yet the writer remained undetected.

The following document presents an agreeable view of Josephine's resignation, and completes the picture just sketched of her ordinary mode of life during the whole period of her retreat:—

*Josephine to Napoleon (from Navarre).*

"SIRE,—I received, this morning, the welcome note which was written on the eve of your departure for St. Cloud, and hasten to reply to its tender and affectionate contents These, indeed, do not in

themselves surprise me; but only as being received so early as fifteen days after my establishment here; so perfectly assured was I that your attachment would search out the means of consoling me under a separation necessary to the tranquillity of both. The thought that your care follows me into my retreat renders it almost agreeable.

"After having known all the sweets of a love that is shared, and all the suffering of one that is so no longer; after having exhausted all the pleasures that supreme power can confer, and the happiness of beholding the man whom I loved enthusiastically admired, is there aught else, save repose, to be desired? What illusions can now remain for me? All such vanished when it became necessary to renounce you. Thus, the only ties which yet bind me to life are my sentiments for you, attachment for my children, the possibility of being able still to do some good, and, above all, the assurance that you are happy. Do not, then, condole with me on my being here, distant from a court, which you appear to think I regret. Surrounded by those who are attached to me, free to follow my taste for the arts, I find myself better at Navarre than anywhere else; for I enjoy more completely the society of the former, and form a thousand projects which may prove useful to the latter, and will embellish the scenes I owe to your bounty. There is much to be done here, for all around are discovered the traces of destruction: these I would efface, that there may exist no memorial of those horrible inflictions which your genius has taught the nation almost to forget. In repairing whatever these ruffians of revolution laboured to annihilate, I shall diffuse comfort around me; and the benedictions of the poor will afford me infinitely more pleasure than the feigned adulations of courtiers.

"I have already told you what I think of the functionaries in this department, but have not spoken sufficiently of the respectable bishop (M. Bourlier).

Every day I learn some new trait which causes me still more highly to esteem the man who unites the most enlightened benevolence with the most amiable dispositions. He shall be intrusted with distributing my alms-deeds in Evreux; and as he visits the indigent himself, I shall be assured that my charities are properly bestowed.

"I cannot sufficiently thank you, sire, for the liberty you have permitted me of choosing the members of my household, all of whom contribute to the pleasure of a delightful society. One circumstance alone gives me pain, namely, the etiquette of costume, which becomes a little tiresome in the country. You fear that there may be something wanting to the rank I have preserved, should a slight infraction be allowed in the toilet of these gentlemen; but I believe you are wrong in thinking they would, for one minute, forget the respect due to the woman who was your companion. Their respect for yourself, joined to the sincere attachment they bear to me (which I cannot doubt), secures me against the danger of being ever obliged to recall what it is your wish they should remember. My most honourable title is derived, not from having been crowned, but assuredly from having been chosen by you—none other is of value—that alone suffices for my immortality.

"I expect Eugene. I doubly long to see him; for he will doubtless bring me a new pledge of your remembrance; and I can question him at my ease of a thousand things concerning which I desire to be informed, but cannot inquire of you; things, too, of which you ought still less to speak to me. My daughter will come also, but later, her health not permitting her to travel at this season. I beseech you, sire, to recommend that she take care of herself; and insist, since I am to remain here, that she do every thing possible to spare me the insupportable anxiety I feel under any increase of her ill health. The weakness in her chest alarms me beyond all

expression. I desire Corvisart to write me his opinion without reserve.

"My circle is at this time somewhat more numerous than usual, there being several visiters, besides many of the inhabitants of Evreux and the environs, whom I see, of course. I am pleased with their manners, and with their admiration of you,—a particular in which, as you know, I am not easily satisfied; in short, I find myself perfectly at home in the midst of my forest, and entreat you, sire, no longer to fancy to yourself that there is no living at a distance from court. Besides you there is nothing there I regret, since I shall have my children with me soon, and already enjoy the society of the small number of friends who remained faithful to me. Do not forget *your friend;* tell her sometimes that you preserve for her an attachment which constitutes the felicity of her life; often repeat to her that you are happy, and be assured that for her the future will thus be peaceful, as the past has been stormy—and often sad."

The first event of importance which broke in upon this tranquillity, was the birth of the King of Rome on the 26th March, 1811. With more than even the usual share of self-devotedness which belongs exclusively to woman's attachment, Josephine could not forget that she had been a wife and an empress. The announcement, therefore, of the happiness of a rival in each of these capacities, though her habitual prudence and respect for Napoleon repressed all external signs, could not but be extremely painful. It happened that her whole household were in Evreux at a grand entertainment given by the prefect, at the moment when the news reached that functionary, with orders for rejoicings. The party returned immediately to the palace, where Josephine had remained with the Princess d'Arberg, her lady of honour. "I confess," says Madame Decrest, then a youthful visiter at Navarre, "that

my boundless affection for Josephine caused me violent sorrow, when I thought that she who occupied her place was now completely happy. Knowing as yet but imperfectly the grandeur of soul which characterized the empress, her entire denial of self, and absolute devotion to the happiness of the emperor, I imagined there must still remain in her so much of the woman as would excite bitter regret at not having been the mother of a son so ardently desired. I judged like a frivolous person of the gay world, who had never known cares beyond those of a ball. On arriving at the palace, where the first comers had spread the news, I learned how to appreciate one who had so long been the cherished companion, often the counsellor, and always the true friend of Napoleon. I beheld every face beaming with joy, and Josephine's more radiant than any, for all but reflected her satisfaction. No sooner had the party from the carriages entered the saloon, than she eagerly inquired what details we had learned. 'I do regret,' she continued to repeat, 'being so far distant from Paris: at Malmaison I could have had information every half hour! I greatly rejoice that the painful sacrifice which I made for France is likely to be useful, and that her future destiny is now secure. How happy the emperor must be! One thing alone makes me sad; namely, not having been informed of that happiness by himself: but then he has so many orders to give, so many congratulations to receive. Young ladies, we must do here as elsewhere; there must be a fête to solemnize the accomplishment of so many vows. I will give you a ball. And, as the saloons are small, I will have the hall of the guards floored above the marble; for the whole city of Evreux must come to rejoice with us: I can never have too many people on this occasion. Make your preparations; get ready some of my jewels; I must not, in the present case, continue to receive my visiters in a *bonnet de nuit*. As for you, gentlemen,

I require for this once your grand costume.' I have added nothing," says our agreeable authority, "to these words of Josephine; only they were not all uttered in regular succession. Her majesty's pleasing countenance was, if possible, more than usually open and frank in its expression while she spoke, and never, in my opinion, did she show herself more worthy of the high fortune she had enjoyed."

The omission, however, in not despatching an especial messenger to Navarre, seems to have greatly pained Josephine; for the same night she wrote the following delicate, yet touching, letter to Napoleon:—

"*Navarre, March* 20–21, 1811.

"SIRE,—Amid the numerous felicitations which you receive from every corner of Europe, from all the cities of France, and from each regiment of your army, can the feeble voice of a woman reach your ear, and will you deign to listen to her who so often consoled your sorrows and sweetened your pains, now that she speaks to you only of that happiness in which all your wishes are fulfilled? Having ceased to be your wife, dare I felicitate you on becoming a father? Yes, sire, without hesitation, for my soul renders justice to yours, in like manner as you know mine; I can conceive every emotion you must experience, as you divine all that I feel at this moment; and, though separated, we are united by that sympathy which survives all events.

"I should have desired to learn the birth of the King of Rome from yourself, and not from the sound of the cannon of Evreux, or the courier of the prefect; I know, however, that in preference to all, your first attentions are due to the public authorities of the state, to the foreign ministers, to your family, and especially to the fortunate princess who has realized your dearest hopes. She cannot be more tenderly devoted to you than I; but she has been enabled to contribute more towards your happiness,

by securing that of France. She has then a right to your first feelings, to all your cares; and I, who was but your companion in times of difficulty—I cannot ask more than a place in your affection, far removed from that occupied by the Empress Maria Louisa. Not till you shall have ceased to watch by her bed, not till you are weary of embracing your son, will you take the pen to converse with your best friend.—I will wait.

"Meanwhile, it is not possible for me to delay telling you, that more than any one in the world do I rejoice in your joy; and you doubt not my sincerity, when I here say, that, far from feeling affliction at a sacrifice necessary to the repose of all, I congratulate myself on having made it, since I now suffer alone. But I am wrong—I do not suffer, while you are happy; and have but one regret, in not having yet done enough to prove to you how dear you were to me. I have no account of the health of the empress; I dare to depend upon you, sire, so far as to hope that I shall have circumstantial details of the great event which assures the perpetuity of the name you have so nobly illustrated. Eugene and Hortense will write me, imparting their own satisfaction; but it is *from you* that I desire to know if your child be well—if he resemble you—if I shall one day be permitted to see him; in short, I expect *from you* unlimited confidence, and upon such I have some claims, in consideration, sire, of the boundless attachment I shall cherish for you while life remains."

On the morrow, Eugene arrived at Malmaison, and from him Josephine obtained the details about which she had felt such anxiety. For a time, the most serious apprehensions had been entertained for the life of both mother and child. Napoleon continued to walk backwards and forwards in the saloon adjoining the imperial bedchamber; but, amid the most agitating fears, he showed his presence of mind and

wonderful command of himself, by giving to Dubois* the only direction which left a chance to the empress. "Treat my wife as you would a shopkeeper's in the Rue St. Denis." The danger becoming still more pressing, a fear arose that either the empress or her infant must be sacrificed. "Save my wife!" exclaimed Napoleon; "the rest affects me little." —"Assuredly," says our authority, one who heard the viceroy's account, "Eugene would not have ventured such a recital of Napoleon's love for Maria Louisa, had he not known that his mother had frankly resigned her claims to what she considered the necessities of the state." How unjustly, therefore, have those judged her, who say that she regretted the emperor more than the *husband*. The viceroy further assured Josephine, that the emperor had said to him, on departing, "You are going to see your mother, Eugene; tell her, that I am certain she will rejoice more than any one at my good fortune. I would have written to her already, had I not been completely absorbed in the pleasure of looking upon my son. I tear myself from him only to attend to the most indispensable duties. This evening, I will discharge the sweetest duty of all—I will write to Josephine."

Accordingly, about eleven o'clock the same evening, the folding-doors were opened in great form, and the announcement, "from the emperor," ushered in one of his own pages, bearer of a letter from Napoleon. Josephine recognised the youth, after a lapse of two years, and, concealing her own anxiety, conversed with him on his family, for she perceived that, from fear of losing the emperor's billet, he had so secured it about his person as to render its recovery a work of some time. The empress retired to read this ardently desired communication; and, on re-entering the saloon, after an absence of half an hour, it was easy to perceive that she had been weeping, and that the viceroy, who had accom-

* A celebrated accoucheur who attended Maria Louisa.

panied her, exhibited also much emotion. "We dared not," says one who was present, "question the empress; but, observing our curiosity, she had the condescension to gratify us with a sight of the letter; it consisted of about ten or twelve lines, traced on one page, and was, as usual, covered with blots. I do not exactly remember the commencement, but the conclusion was, *word for word*,—'This infant, in concert with *our Eugene*, will constitute my happiness and that of France.'—'Is it possible,' remarked the empress, 'to be more amiable? or could any thing be better calculated to sooth whatever might be painful in my thoughts at this moment, did I not so sincerely love the emperor? This uniting of my son with his own is indeed worthy of him, who, when he wills, is the most delightful of men. This it is which has so much moved me.' Calling, then, for the messenger, Josephine said, 'For the emperor,—and for yourself'—giving the page a letter, and a small morocco case, containing a diamond brooch, value five thousand francs (two hundred guineas). This, indeed, was the present intended for the messenger should the child be a girl, and one of twelve thousand francs for a boy; but, with her usual good taste, she made this alteration, fearing that people might talk rather of her munificence than satisfaction. Exactly in the same style of splendid propriety was given the entertainment which she had promised to her little court."

Josephine had even carried her compliance so far as to attempt an intercourse with Maria Louisa. Napoleon, too, encouraged this correspondence, and spoke to his young bride on the subject. "But the latter," to use Josephine's own words, "rejected this proposal with such manifest dissatisfaction, that it was not renewed. I am sorry for it; her presence would have given me no uneasiness, and I might have bestowed good counsel as to the best means of pleasing the emperor." Upon the present occasion, another effort was made, and, unless we are

mistaken, the reader will discover much nobleness in the following letter:—

*Josephine to Maria Louisa.*

"MADAM,—While you were only the second spouse of the emperor, I deemed it becoming to maintain silence towards your majesty; that reserve, I think, may be laid aside, now that you are become the mother of an heir to the empire. You might have had some difficulty in crediting the sincerity of her whom, perhaps, you regarded as a rival; you will give faith to the felicitations of a Frenchwoman, for you have bestowed a son upon France. Your amiableness and sweetness of disposition have gained you the heart of the emperor; your benevolence merits the blessings of the unfortunate; the birth of a son claims the benedictions of all France. How amiable a people—how feeling—how deserving of admiration are the French! To use an expression which paints them exactly—'*they love to love!*' Oh! how delightful, then, to be loved by them! It is upon this facility, and, at the same time, steadiness of affection, that the partisans of their ancient kings have so long rested their expectations; and here their trust is not without reason. Whatever may happen, the name of Henri IV., for instance, will always be reverenced. It must be confessed, however, that the Revolution, without corrupting the heart, has greatly extended the intelligence, and rendered the spirits of men more exacting. Under our kings, they were satisfied with repose—now they demand glory. These, madam, are the two blessings, the foretaste of which you have been called to give to France. She will enjoy them in perfection under your son, if to the manly virtues of his sire he join those of his august mother, by which they may be tempered."

Though the preceding pages have presented a

general view of Josephine's manner of life during the interesting years of its close, the remaining portion of these memoirs might be almost indefinitely prolonged. A more particular account of her retirement would furnish anecdotes of her intercourse with most of the marked individuals of the times, who in turn appeared in the saloon of Malmaison, or shared in the solitude of Navarre. Materials, too, are abundant and authentic; but interesting as these would be, we omit them with less regret than the details that might be given of Josephine's unwearied beneficence, gentleness, and resignation. Her character had always been peculiarly distinguished for those softer qualities which constitute the amiable woman; and now, in the season of comparative adversity, her life read one continuous lesson of practical virtue. Out of an income of 125,000*l.* per annum, a sum by no means large, with an imperial title, and establishment conforming, to be supported, between four and five thousand a-year were expended in charity in the neighbourhood of Navarre alone; this is exclusive of the sums disbursed to the poor at Malmaison, and throughout the whole of France, for whenever misfortune was known to Josephine, its claims met with sympathy and relief. Nor was this a thoughtless profusion, as some have represented, or productive of embarrassment in her family concerns. Her charities were confided to competent and pious men, while her own sorrows had taught discrimination; and the slight disorder at first occasioned by the injudicious purchases of an agent at Navarre, the waste of her attendants, too apt to forget the diminished resources of their mistress, and, it may be, her own inexperience of a limited income, was quickly restored, the establishments at Malmaison and Navarre being latterly distinguished alike for economy as for elegance.

But the goodness which consists in merely distributing money, however judiciously applied, migh

be deemed no great virtue in one of so benevolent a temperament, and long accustomed to command an influence so extensive. It is, therefore, upon an innate kindliness of heart, an attuning of the whole moral affections to sympathize with sorrow and misfortune, that we claim for our subject her title of "the excellent Josephine." The benevolence which regards the feelings of inferiors, which respects and pities while it relieves, as it is infinitely the rarest, so it is by far the most exalted charity. This had always appeared predominant in her conduct, but never more than during the period now under consideration. The empress is never known to have used one harsh expression towards any in her little court; but, in the case of real offence, she used to punish the fault by not speaking to the delinquent for a length of time proportioned to the cause of displeasure. So effectual did this prove, that there is no instance of the necessity of a repeated infliction. The household, which was thus controlled, be it remembered, was one of imperial magnificence; for Napoleon would suffer nothing to be changed in the regal state to which she had been accustomed in the Tuileries, and even added twelve pages after the establishment had been completed. Her immediate circle consisted of tried friends,—a circumstance which gave a tenderness to the intercourse at Navarre rarely to be found in courts. The following extract from one of her letters on this subject is pleasing:—

"You will find with me the gentlest and most agreeable society. Some of my ladies are kind and good; they have not always been happy, and will therefore sympathize in your melancholy without forcing you to be gay; others will beguile you of your sorrows by the charms of their wit; and with the gentlemen of my court you may converse on those acquirements which you have cultivated with pleasure and success. Some young persons in whom

I am interested will study along with your amiable daughter; she will increase their knowledge by communicating her own, and will receive in return lessons in music and accomplishments not otherwise accessible in the château of her deceased father. Thus, many advantages concur to decide you to come and live with me; and I venture to believe that your affection will reckon among these inducements the certainty of thus contributing to render my retreat more pleasing. Hitherto, I have been surrounded by all imaginable proofs of regard. I have received visits from the whole of Napoleon's court. It is known that he *desires* I should be treated always as empress; and besides, people wish to see with their own eyes how I support my new situation. When they shall have been able to say several times before Napoleon that they have been at Malmaison, and shall have fully examined my countenance, and criticised my manners, they will cease to come eight leagues to visit a person who can no longer do any thing for them, and I shall be left alone with my true friends, of whom *I will* that you augment the number. These words *I will* have escaped me; it is the consequence of a habit which I shall correct; but one of my habits I shall never resign,—that of loving you faithfully. Come, and believe in the attachment of "JOSEPHINE."

Among a circle thus selected, Josephine would hardly fail of securing as large a share of happiness as her circumstances permitted to expect. She in turn exhausted every means of pleasing, in order to render their voluntary retreat agreeable to her friends; a retreat, however, recompensed by salaries equal to those at the imperial court, and which further conciliated Napoleon's approval. The young ladies mentioned by the empress, orphans, in several instances, of ancient houses, whose parents she had known, received not only a most accomplished education, but a dowry also from their excellent patron-

ess, who watched over their establishment in life with parental solicitude. To the ladies of the court generally she was in the constant habit of giving presents, studying, at the same time, to do this in such a way as might take away all unpleasant sense of obligation. On her own birthday, for example, and the new year, a lottery of jewelry was established at Navarre or Malmaison; as the empress distributed the tickets, she contrived to influence the course of fortune, and it was not till after the drawing had ceased that the ladies were surprised to find they had all obtained prizes. When any of her ladies were sick, Josephine was ever by the bed of the patient; and to cheer the hours of confinement, instead of the usual sitting-room, the morning parties for reading or work were transferred to the apartments of the convalescent so soon as the physician gave permission. Similar attentions were bestowed on even her inferior attendants, whose habitual complaint on falling ill was, that they should be so long before seeing their mistress. "Do not let that distress you," she would say; "I will come often to see you." Thus she actually passed a portion of every day for two months in the room of Madame d'Avrillon, her femme-de-chambre, whose thigh had been fractured by a fall, during some amusements upon the ice on one of the lakes at Navarre. But it would be vain, within our present limits, to attempt a description of Josephine's active benevolence in favour of the unfortunate, or her feeling consideration for all who approached her person:

Comme nos cœurs, joignons nos voix
Chantons l'auguste Josephine;
Aux fleurs qui naissent sous ses lois
Sa main ne laisse pas l'épine.
Partout la suit de ses bienfaits
Ou l'esperance ou la memoire;
De Josephine pour jamais
Vive le nom! vive la gloire!

From their separation, the correspondence between Napoleon and Josephine continued undiminished in

respect and affection. Notes from the emperor arrived weekly at Navarre or Malmaison, and he never returned from any journey or long absence without seeing the "illustrious solitary." No sooner had he alighted, than a messenger, usually his own confidential attendant, was despatched to Malmaison. "Tell the empress I am well, and desire to hear that she is happy." The reserve, or rather jealousy, of Maria Louisa, indeed, would have prohibited, as a matter of course, any communication with his son. Josephine, however, did frequently see the child, though secretly; for so Napoleon had resolved, both in compliance with her own request, and because he himself seemed thence to derive a pleasure. These meetings took place at Bagatelle, a royal pavilion near Paris, Napoleon and Madame de Montesquieu, governess to the young prince, being the sole confidants. At first, these interviews were frequent, and always most affecting on Josephine's part; but afterward, as the boy grew up, and the danger of discovery consequently augmented, they became more rare, and were finally discontinued altogether. The following are extracts from a letter written by Josephine to Napoleon after the last of these meetings:—

"Assuredly, sire, it was not mere curiosity which led me to desire to meet the King of Rome; I wished to examine his countenance—to hear the sound of his voice, so like your own—to behold you caress a son on whom centre so many hopes—and to repay him the tenderness which you lavished on my own Eugene. When you recall how dearly you loved mine, you will not be surprised at my affection for the son of another, since he is yours likewise, nor deem either false or exaggerated sentiments which you have so fully experienced in your own heart. The moment I saw you enter, leading the young Napoleon in your hand, was, unquestionably, one of the happiest of my life. It effaced for a time the recollection of all that had preceded; for never have I received from you a more touching mark of affec

tion. It is more; it is one of esteem—of sincere attachment. Still, I am perfectly sensible, sire, that those meetings which afford me so much pleasure cannot be frequently renewed; and I must not so far intrude on your compliance as to put it often under contribution. Let this sacrifice to your domestic tranquillity be one proof more of my desire to see you happy."

In every thing Napoleon continued to act with the same confiding tenderness as in the case of his son. All the private griefs in which Josephine had shared, and the sorrows to which she had ministered, were still disclosed to her as before their separation. Witness the following letter:—

'SIRE,—The indisposition which has given you some uneasiness on my account has left no bad effects, and I am almost tempted to bless the dispensation, as the cause of my receiving a billet, which proves you continue always to cherish the same interest in my well-being. This certainty of your attachment will contribute to re-establish a health which is already better. What you say respecting your family disputes afflicts me so much the more that I cannot, as formerly, endeavour to reconcile them. I have laid down as a law never to meddle with what concerns your sisters; and I believe, were I to fail in this self-imposed rule of conduct, my representations would be ill received. I have never been loved by these personages, who interest me deeply, since your happiness depends in part upon their conduct. Envy and jealousy, unfortunately, were the sentiments I inspired; and now that I am deprived of a power, the cause of their umbrage, resentment still remains at having been so long obliged to conceal their jealousy. I believe you exaggerate their faults towards you,—a necessary consequence of the affection you bear them. They ove you sincerely, but not with that exaltation of sentiment you require in every thing; and they feel

not, therefore, the chagrin they may cause you. The Queen of Naples, for instance, was forced, not only to receive the Princess of Wales, while travelling through her states, but to observe all the honours due to that title. You would have blamed her had she acted otherwise; for her royal highness was unfortunate,—a claim more urgent than even illustrious birth. Why, then, impute it as a crime to have received an afflicted woman, accused, perhaps, through injustice and calumny? Separated from a husband and from a child who loved her, had she not whereof to complain? and why, then, deny her the sad consolation of an honourable hospitality? Be assured, therefore, that in all this there was nothing of political contrivance,—no intention to *brave* you.* Your sister of Naples may be ambitious, but she overflows with tenderness for you, and is too proud of the title of your sister ever to do any thing which might render her unworthy thereof. As to the Princess Pauline, she is a pretty child, whom all of us have taken pleasure in spoiling; we need not, then, be surprised or offended at her absurdities. With her, indulgence always succeeds better than a severity, which we are forced to lay aside whenever we look upon her ravishing beauty. Do not chide her, then; recall her gently, and she will reform. Joseph is obliged to manage the Spaniards,—a circumstance which fully explains the kind of opposition in which you are often placed. Time will bring back union between you, by consolidating a power opposed by many obstacles in this its commencement. When you are better satisfied with your family, do not fail to inform me; none, sire, can more rejoice in the good understanding that ought to prevail there. Adieu. Calm your head,—allow your heart to act; there I hold a place which I desire to maintain, and will eternally merit by an affection without limits."

* This passage refers to the late Queen Caroline, who played a thousand absurdities at the court of Joachim Murat.

The personal intercourse between Napoleon and Josephine, though not unfrequent, was conducted with the most decorous attention to appearances. Their last interview but one took place before he left Paris for the Russian campaign. This enterprise the ex-empress had contemplated with well-grounded alarm, and repeatedly solicited a meeting. The emperor at length arrived at Malmaison; he was in a caleche, which drew up at the park-gate, and, with becoming delicacy, his repudiated wife received his visit in the garden. Seating themselves on a circular bench, within sight of the windows of the saloon, but beyond hearing, they continued in animated conversation for above two hours. The courtiers, concealed behind the window-drapery, endeavoured to divine, from the changing expression of the speakers, the subject of their discourse. Josephine spoke at first anxiously, and almost in alarm; the emperor replied with eager confidence, and seemed by degrees to reassure her, for it was evident that she felt satisfied with his arguments. In all probability the conversation turned upon the intended expedition against Russia. At length Napoleon rose, kissed the empress's hand, and walked with her to his carriage. During the rest of the day, Josephine appeared perfectly satisfied, and more than once repeated to her ladies that she had never seen the emperor in better spirits, adding, "How I regret my inability to do any thing for that *fortunate of the earth!*" Such was her expression; a few months sufficed to make the misfortunes of Napoleon a by-word among the nations.

The campaign of Moscow began, that of Saxony completed, the disasters of the empire, and the allies entered France. One hurried and distressful interview, on the return of the fugitive, was the last of personal intercourse; but even in the midst of the tremendous struggle that followed, Napoleon found leisure to think of Josephine; or, rather, the thoughts

of her whose idea had mingled with the dreams of youthful glory, had imparted sweeter interest to first success, and who had been abandoned in the height of prosperity, regained intenser power in the time of reverse. His letters to Josephine were frequent and more affectionate than ever; while hers, written by every opportunity, were perused, under all circumstances, with a promptitude which showed clearly the pleasure or the consolation that was expected; in fact, it had always been observed, that letters from Navarre and Malmaison were torn rather than broken open, and read, whatever else might be retarded. But as misfortunes thickened around, correspondence became impossible; and in March, 1814, the empress, then residing at Malmaison, had already been many days without word from the army, the last letter which she had received being dated from Brienne, after the battle which was fought there on the 29th of January. In this uncertainty, she had one morning taken her usual station in a summer-house overlooking the road to Paris, to watch for intelligence, when she perceived "a sister of charity" passing under the window. Knowing that these pious females had proved of great service to the wounded French, the empress entered into conversation, and learned that the good nun was going to Paris to apply for a portion of contraband English cottons which had been ordered to be distributed to the hospitals. "We have many wounded officers with us," said she, "and have no sheets."—"Sister," replied the empress, "you do not know the minister; return, and leave the affair to me." The religious willingly acquiesced, for her presence was needed at the hospital; but had not proceeded far when she returned. "Pardon the curiosity which brings me back; I would know who it is that so kindly interposes in our behalf. I may guess, but—"—"Yes," answered the empress, with a sweet yet melancholy smile, "I am poor Josephine; say nothing to any one"—"No, certainly," returned the

nun. "Excuse me once more; our lint and bandages are almost exhausted; would your majesty deign—"—"Say no more; we will make some for you here." Henceforth the elegant employments of the morning were laid aside, and the fair hands at Malmaison daily occupied in forming bandages and scraping lint. But it was impossible to remain almost in the midst of conflicting armies; the flight of the imperial family to Blois alarmed her exceedingly; and on the 29th of March, at eight in the morning, she departed, nearly in despair, for Navarre. Already the formidable cry "Cossacks!" had sounded repeatedly in her ears, when, after travelling about thirty miles, the pole of her carriage broke, and at the same moment a troop of horsemen appeared at a distance. Josephine, in her distraction, taking these, which were French hussars, for Cossacks or Prussians, began to fly across the fields, in the midst of heavy rain, and had thus proceeded a considerable distance before her attendants discovered the mistake. The carriage being speedily repaired, the journey terminated without further accident. The empress had scarcely spoken on the road, but, on entering the palace, recollection seemed to overpower her; she sunk on a seat, exclaiming, "Surely, surely, Bonaparte is ignorant of what is passing within sight of the gates of Paris; or, if he knows, how cruel the thoughts that must now agitate his breast! Oh, if he had listened to me!"

During this short stay at Navarre, the empress wrote a great deal, taking no relaxation beyond a ride in the park, always alone in the morning, and another after dinner with some one of her ladies. Any conversation in which she indulged ran constantly upon the state of France and Napoleon, of whom at this time she seemed to take a melancholy delight in relating anecdotes; but every such conversation, like a reminiscence of concentrated grief, concluded with the remark, "Ah! had he listened to me!" Her only pleasure during this period of pain-

ful uncertainty was, to shut herself up alone, and read the letters lately received from the emperor, which she had carefully packed up and brought from Malmaison. The last of these, dated, as we have said, from Brienne, she always kept in her bosom. This cherished document, after giving an account of the engagement, concluded with the following words: —"On beholding those scenes where I had passed my boyhood, and comparing my peaceful condition then with the agitation and terrors which I now experience, I several times said in my own mind, 'I have sought to meet death in many conflicts—I can no longer fear it; to me, death would now be a blessing—but I would once more see Josephine.'"

All uncertainty at length vanished on receipt of the following letter; and Josephine perceived how vain had been her hopes of Napoleon retrieving his fortunes:—

*To the Empress Josephine, at Malmaison.*

"*Fontainbleau, April* 16, 1814.

"DEAR JOSEPHINE,—I wrote to you on the 8th of this month (it was a Friday), and perhaps you have not received my letter. Hostilities still continued; possibly it may have been intercepted; at present, the communications must be re-established. I have formed my resolution; I have no doubt this billet will reach you. I will not repeat what I said to you: then I lamented my situation; now I congratulate myself thereon. My head and spirit are freed from an enormous weight. My fall is great, but at least it is useful, as men say. In my retreat I shall substitute the pen for the sword. The history of my reign will be curious; the world has yet seen me only in profile,—I shall show myself in full. How many things have I to disclose! how many are the men of whom a false estimate is entertained! I have heaped benefits upon millions of wretches! What have they done in the end for me? They have

all betrayed me—yes, all. I except from this number the good Eugene, so worthy of you and of me. Adieu, my dear Josephine; be resigned, as I am, and ever remember him who never forgot and never will forget you. Farewell, Josephine.

"NAPOLEON."

"P.S. I expect to hear from you at Elba: I am not very well."

The perusal of this letter overwhelmed Josephine with grief and consternation, but recovering from her stupor, she exclaimed, with impassioned energy, "I must not remain here—my presence is necessary to the emperor. That duty is indeed more Maria Louisa's than mine; but the emperor is alone—forsaken. Well, I at least will not abandon him. I might be dispensed with while he was happy—now, I am sure he expects me." Tears came to her relief, and, after a pause, she added, with more composure, addressing M. de Beaumont, her chamberlain, "I may, however, interfere with his arrangements. You will remain here with me till intelligence be received from the allied sovereigns—they will respect her who was the wife of Napoleon." These expectations were not deceived; the Emperor Alexander sent assurances of his friendly intentions, and the other allies united in a request that she would return to Malmaison. Though moved by these attentions, she hesitated for some time, from respect to her husband, and yielded only when she found that high family interests might suffer by her refusal. Meanwhile, ever anxious about him who had so long occupied every thought, she addressed the following note to Alexander:—

"SIRE,—My heart responds to the duty of expressing my perfect gratitude to your majesty. I never can forget, that, having scarcely arrived in Paris (for I will not say *entered*), you deigned to

think of me. Amid the misfortunes which affect my country, this regard would prove almost a consolation to me, could it be extended to a person whom it was formerly permitted me to name with pride. You, too, sire, then united the same name with expressions of august friendship. To recall to you a sentiment once participated is to remind you of all that such a remembrance demands. In a soul like yours the recollection will never be effaced."

In one day after her re-establishment at Malmaison, Josephine found herself restored to all the importance of her rank: a guard of honour was appointed for her protection, her property had been respected, and her little court, elegant as ever, she now saw frequented by some of the most marked personages of Europe. The Emperor of Russia presented himself an early visiter at Malmaison; Josephine received the emperor in the gallery, and, with her wonted grace, expressed how much she felt on the occasion. "Madam," replied Alexander, "I burned with the desire of beholding you; since I entered France, I have never heard your name pronounced but with benedictions. In the cottage and in the palace I have collected accounts of your angelic goodness; and I do myself a pleasure in thus presenting to your majesty the universal homage of which I am the bearer." Those illustrious personages then withdrew from their attendants, and conversed anxiously and earnestly alone. Afterward they passed into the garden, where they were joined by Hortense, who had arrived from Paris, and the emperor, giving a note to each lady, the conversation, in which there can be no doubt the subject of Napoleon was frequently introduced, seemed to become more and more interesting. The King of Prussia also visited at Malmaison, and even the Bourbons showed attention; and the empress was to have been presented to Louis. Her children, also, had been graciously received; Hortense's honour

as queen were confirmed, and Eugene's rank as marshal of France offered, but declined. Nothing, however, could render Josephine insensible to the fall of her husband. The following letter expresses sentiments equally respectful and tender:—

*To the Emperor Napoleon, at Elba.*

"Sire,—Now only can I calculate the whole extent of the misfortune of having beheld my union with you dissolved by law; now do I indeed lament being no more than your friend, who can but mourn over a misfortune great as it is unexpected. It is not the loss of a throne that I regret on your account; I know from myself how such a loss may be endured; but my heart sinks at the grief you must have experienced on separating from the old companions of your glory. You must have regretted, not only your officers, but the soldiers, whose countenances even, names, and brilliant deeds in arms you could recall, and all of whom you could not recompense; for they were too numerous. To leave heroes like them, deprived of their chief, who so often shared in their toils, must have struck your soul with unutterable grief; in that sorrow especially do I participate.

"You will also have to mourn over the ingratitude and falling away of friends, on whom you deemed you could confide. Ah! sire, why cannot I fly to you! why cannot I give you the assurance that exile has no terrors save for vulgar minds, and that, far from diminishing a sincere attachment, misfortune imparts to it new force! I have been on the point of quitting France to follow your footsteps, and to consecrate to you the remainder of an existence which you so long embellished. A single motive restrained me, and that you may divine. If I learn that, contrary to all appearance, I *am the only one* who will fulfil her duty, nothing shall detain me, and I will go to the only place where henceforth there can be happiness for me, since I shall

be able to console you when you are there isolated and unfortunate! Say but the word, and I depart. Adieu, sire; whatever I would add would still be too little; it is no longer by words that my sentiments for you are to be proved, and for actions your consent is necessary. JOSEPHINE."

"Malmaison has been respected; I am there surrounded with attentions by the foreign sovereigns, but had much rather not remain."

The unhappy Josephine had now been so long exposed to agitating changes, that, though immediately after the divorce she had improved in personal appearance, her health had become extremely precarious. New anxieties, in addition to the distressing events which had just occurred, began to alarm her. It was now the commencement of May, and the appointments fixed by the treaty of Fontainbleau had not been paid; the distress occasioned by this very unwarrantable neglect of an obligation which ought to have been especially held sacred by the French government, will be readily conceived by the reader acquainted with Josephine's tastes and benevolent dispositions. Sometimes she would allow an expression of censure to escape against Napoleon, but would instantly retract, "No, no! he is unhappy,—he must be in want himself,—I will sell my jewels, and send him money!" About the same time she resolved to make her will,—a subject on which she had previously wished to consult Napoleon,—and now the faithful creature sent a draft to Elba,—"Make your remarks, sire; you cannot doubt they will be held sacred by me, or that I rejoice in this opportunity of showing my devotion at a time when others fall away from their obedience." This instrument was never completed, which afterward proved a source of great misfortune to Josephine's most loved retainers, none of whom were rewarded as she intended, or as their fidelity merited.

All these grievances preyed upon Josephine's

spirits, but without producing any appearance of disease till the 4th of May, when she dined at St. Leu with Hortense, Eugene and the Emperor of Russia. On returning to Malmaison, she felt a general uneasiness, which, however, yielded to some gentle medicine, and the empress resumed her ordinary occupations, though evidently without the usual enjoyment. Some days after, Lord Beverley, with his two sons, breakfasted at Malmaison; and to this nobleman Josephine expressed herself warmly on the generosity of the English, who at that time, she said, alone spoke of Napoleon in a becoming manner. She complained bitterly of the ingratitude of those who, not satisfied with abandoning his falling fortunes, overwhelmed his memory with calumny. On the 10th, Alexander, with several distinguished foreigners, dined at Malmaison. Josephine, despite a headache and cold shiverings, which she laboured to conceal, did the honours of the table, and in the evening attempted even to take part in a game of "prisoners," on the beautiful lawn in front of her residence. How many painful associations must have connected themselves with this amusement! Both mind and body unfitted her for such exercise, and she was constrained to become a spectator, but with such an altered appearance as to excite the alarm of her guests. To their anxious inquiries, however, she continued to reply with a faint smile, which belied the assurance, "that she was only fatigued, and would be well to-morrow." To-morrow came, but Josephine was evidently worse; and for fourteen days, her complaint, without assuming any definite form, or rendering absolute confinement necessary, was frequently attended at night with fainting, and sometimes a wandering of the mind, more from anxiety than delirium. On the 24th, the empress had a slight attack of sore throat, but otherwise rallied so much as to insist on receiving the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia, who were engaged to dine with her on that day. She did accordingly appear, bu

was forced to retire, and Hortense, who never left Malmaison during her mother's illness, took her place at table. Thenceforward the disease assumed a most alarming character of gangrenous quinsy, and its progress became fearfully rapid. On the morning of the 25th, Alexander returned, and, filled with anxiety at the alteration in Josephine's appearance, requested permission to send his own physician. This the empress declined; but from that day she was attended by her own and the two physicians attached to the households of her son and daughter. On the night of the 26–27th, a blister was applied between the shoulders, and sinapisms to the feet; but though these gave some relief from pain, they effected no impression on the disease. Still Josephine, with the same angelic sweetness which had marked her whole life, endeavoured, by concealing her suffering, to sooth the anxiety of her surrounding friends. From the morning of the 26th, she appears to have been perfectly sensible of her danger; for, looking them steadily upon the physician, and perceiving his alarm, she silently pressed his hand in token of consciousness and acquiescence. She even took an interest in her former occupations; and on the 27th, when informed that the celebrated flower-painter Redoubté had come to draw two favourite plants in flower, she sent for him, extended her hand, then pushed him gently away, saying, "You must not catch my sore throat, for next week" (this was on Wednesday) "I hope to see you advanced with a fresh masterpiece." The preceding night had passed in a lethargic sleep, and at ten in the morning of the 28th, the physicians, after consulting, deemed it proper to prepare Eugene and Hortense for the final change. From those two cherished beings, whom she had loved so truly, Josephine heard a communication which thus lost all its bitterness. With pious resignation, she received the last rites of the Romish faith from the ministration of her grandchildren's preceptor, for the parish clergyman of Ruel happened to be absent. Late on the

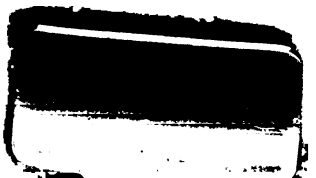
same day the Emperor Alexander arrived, and was shown into the chamber of the sufferer, now evidently approaching the goal of all her sorrows. By the bed of their mother knelt Eugene and Hortense, too deeply moved to address the emperor; but at sight of a monarch whom she regarded with gratitude, Josephine seemed to acquire renewed strength, made a sign for all to approach, and said, "At least I shall die regretted; I have always desired the happiness of France; I did all in my power to contribute to it; and I can say with truth to all of you now present at my last moments, that the first wife of Napoleon never caused a single tear to flow." These were her last words; for she fell immediately after into a slumber, which continued, interrupted by a scarcely-audible sigh, till half-past eleven on the morning of the 29th of May, when her gentle spirit calmly passed to a world of love and peace.

At midday, on the 2d of June, 1814, the funeral moved forward from Malmaison, and at five in the evening the body of the Empress of France was consigned to an humble tomb in the village church of Ruel. To obtain even this privilege of being laid in the interior of the consecrated place required no small exertion on the part of her son. Those who then rightfully occupied a throne which she had filled in meekness, and not willingly, ought to have offered no opposition to any respect that could be paid to one whose dying words we have just quoted; whose remains, while they lay in state, were visited by twenty thousand of the people of France; and whose funeral procession was voluntarily closed by two thousand *poor*, who had tasted of her bounty, or cherished her memory. The body had been first embalmed, and finally deposited in a double coffin of lead and sycamore; but a spirit of jealousy or of mean adulation prevented the engraving of any inscription on the plate of gilt silver which occupied the centre panel of the latter. The funeral was otherwise conducted with proper magnificence;

commissioners from the sovereigns of Russia and Prussia headed the procession, which was composed of many foreign princes, marshals, generals, and officers of the French and allied armies. The military, formed in two lines from Malmaison to Ruel, consisted of Russian hussars and the national guards of France. The chief mourners were Prince Eugene, the Grand Duke of Baden, Marquis de Beauharnais (brother-in-law), Count de Tascher (nephew), Count de Beauharnais (cousin), and the grandchildren of the deceased empress. The funeral oration was pronounced by the Archbishop of Tours, while the Bishops of Evreux and Versailles read prayers. Queen Hortense, who had previously been conveyed thither, continued at her devotions in one of the chapels during the whole of the ceremony; but when all but her brother had left the church, they knelt long together beside the grave. The spot is now marked by a monument of white marble, representing the empress in imperial robes, kneeling, and bears the simple, yet touching inscription,—

EUGENE AND HORTENSE TO JOSEPHINE.

With the facts of the volume before the reader, a detailed summary of character would be here superfluous. Few women ever passed through such extraordinary changes of fortune, and none has displayed more patient endurance under trials and reverses, or more affecting self-distrust and singleness of heart when surrounded by greatness. To those who in the preceding pages have contemplated Josephine in private life, the recollection will often arise of that one being whose mild virtues and gentle kindness are the subject of their deepest regret or sweetest gratitude.

THE END.

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